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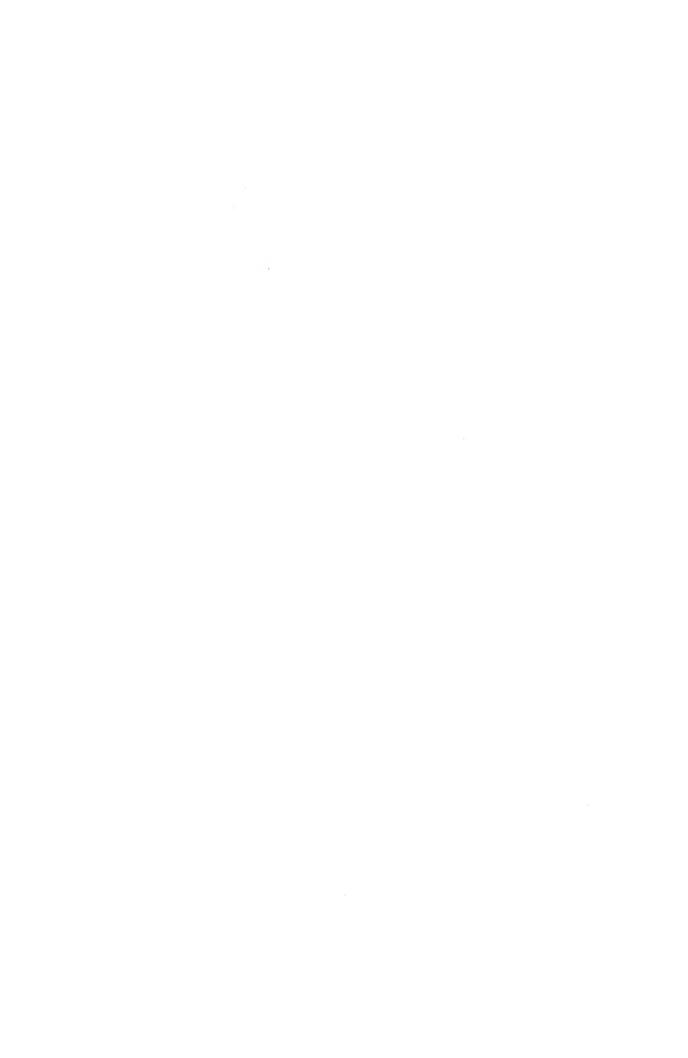






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THE DRAMAS

OF

VICTOR HUGO

THE TWINS AMY ROBSART TORQUEMADA

HOLLAND PAPER EDITION

OF WHICH THERE HAVE BEEN PRINTED

1000 COPIES

No.

NATIONAL EDITION

DRAMAS

TRANSLATED EY

I. G. BURNHAM

PHILADELPHIA: GEORGE BARRIE & SON

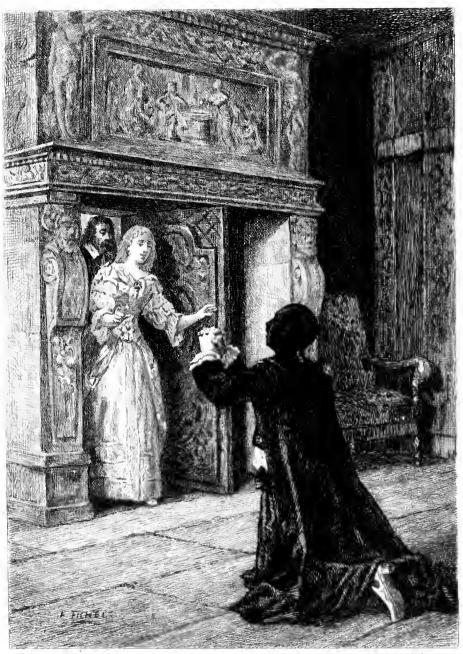
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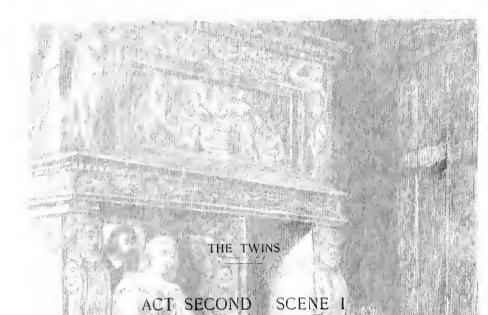


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THE MASK (on his knees, with his face turned toward the fire-place whence the song seems to come).

O come!

(The plate at the back of the fire-place turns slowly upon itself, like a door. A ray of light shines through the opening, upon which the Mask gazes steadfastly as if fascinated, saying in a low voice:)

Oh! come, come now!

(A woman dressed in white appears in the opening. It is Alix.)

PREFACE

BY THE EDITORS

The drama contained in the following pages, which was written in 1839, between Ruy Blas and the Burgraves, unfortunately was never completed. The author wrote but two complete acts; the third is unfinished. Indeed it may well be said that the first two acts as well are unfinished. The first act, which contains nearly nine hundred lines, would necessarily have been abridged and condensed by the poet. Victor Hugo had a habit of beginning one of his works by giving a free rein to his inexhaustible imagination; the result was a superabundance of minute details and of minor developments of the plot, which he would afterward revise, simplifying, rectifying, modifying. We have here only the first sketch, something analogous to the "first proof" of one of Rembrandt's eaux-fortes, which many a connoisseur prefers to the final impression; in them we surprise genius at work, and look on at the creation of a chef-d'œnyre.

			,



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE KING
THE MASK
COMTE JEAN DE CRÉQUI
CARDINAL MAZARIN
GUILLOT-GORJU
TAGUS
COMTE DE BUSSY
DUC DE CHAULNE
COMTE DE BRÉZÉ
VICOMTE D'EMBRUN
MASTER BENOIT TRÉVOUX, Lieutenant of Police
M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN
CHANDENIER

A CITIZEN

A CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

A JAILER

THE QUEEN MOTHER
ALIX DE PONTHIEU
DAME CLAUDE

CITIZENS, PEASANTS, SOLDIERS, POLICE



ACT FIRST

A small deserted square near the Porte Bussy. Two or three narrow streets lead into the square. In the background, above the roofs, can be seen the three spires of Saint-Germain-des-Prés.

As the curtain rises two men are standing near the front of the stage; one of them, Guillot-Gorju, is just completing the task of dressing the other in a costume like his own; that is to say in the fantastic, ragged costume of the comedians of Callot. The other has already donned the yellow stockings, shoes of exaggerated proportions, doublet and short-clothes of old black silk. The costumes and accessories of the two men are exactly alike, so much so that they might easily be mistaken for each other. On the ground are the clothes taken off by the one assuming the disguise—clothes of sober hue, but of rich material.

A few steps away another man, also dressed as a Merry-Andrew, is putting the finishing touches to a juggler's booth, constructed of poles set up in the interstices of the pavement, covered with pieces of straw mattings and odds and ends of damask and other old cloths; outside the booth is a platform upon trestles, and inside, a table with glasses, a card-table, a large drum, two dilapidated chairs, and a valise filled with drugs and phials.

At one side is a small hand-cart. During the first three scenes citizens pass back and forth across the stage at the rear.

SCENE I

GUILLOT-GORJU, THE MAN, TAGUS, at work on the booth.

GUILLOT-GORJU.

Agreed. And now you are transformed.

(He examines with satisfaction the man whom he is assisting to disguise himself.)

In sooth you do resemble me! 't is marvelous.

THE MAN.

Dost think so? When will the lady come?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

Toward twilight.

THE MAN.

Is she young?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

Oh, yes! You 'll think yourself in luck.

(Mysteriously.)

When all is quiet, about eight o'clock at night,

(He points to the farthest corner of the square.) you 'll hear three blows in yon dark corner.

(He strikes the palm of his hand three times.)
Thus.—Then you must say aloud: God alone is master. Compiègne and Pierrefonds. With that she will appear.

THE MAN.

Above all, keep my secret!

GUILLOT-GORJU (protesting with a gesture).

Ah! my friend, rely on me!

THE MAN.

Thou dost not know her name?

GUILLOT-GORJU (continuing to perform the functions of a valet-de-chambre).

I know it not.

(He points to a hovel at the right.)

In front of yonder hovel once, at night, and with no light, I saw her.

THE MAN.

'T is a daring scheme!

GUILLOT-GORJU.

The lady 's of high rank!

THE MAN.

What motive has she?

GUILLOT-GORIU.

At that age? Mon Dieu! wherever God may lead us, we do seek occasion to display the generous impulses with which our hearts are filled; we long to show our zeal in every way, and so we seize on any pretext in default of motives. The first passing breeze removes our thin disguise. Do not alarm her, do not raise her yeil.

THE MAN.

Knows she the prisoner's name?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

Oh, no! Beside the queen and cardinal that awe-inspiring name is known to no one.

THE MAN.

Friend, how came she to apply to you for this affair?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

We are renowned for managing escapes. For us, high walls and bolts and bars are but child's play. Schomberg I set free from the Bastile, the Admiral of Castile from Vincennes, Gif from the temple, and Lescur from the old château of Amiens. We never lack accomplices! Thieves, gipsies, we have friends even among the Jesuits.

THE MAN.

I may employ thee if aught comes of the affair. And so, the lady unsuspectingly will tell me all her plans, believing that she speaks with thee?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

I think so.

THE MAN (handing him a purse which he takes from the clothes lying on the ground).

Here are the hundred louis.

GUILLOT-GORJU.

Thanks, my captain.

THE MAN.

Oh! the letter stolen from the queen's courier.

(Guillot-Gorju hands him a letter which he examines, then carefully bestows in his pocket.)

How didst thou do it, pray?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

'T is very simple and as clear as daylight. Yesterday Tagus and I went out to take the air upon the road to Spain. A gentleman rode by and halted at the Croix-de-Berny. Tagus is no fool; he said to me: "He stops to take a drink; it's very hot." The man in fact sat down beside the church. Thereon did Tagus make a hole in his valise, whence came the letter out with divers ducats. If we had been seen, 't was a hard case; but luckily the man set off again without suspicion.

THE MAN (aside).

On what trifling accidents the fate of empires depends!

(Aloud.)

Thinkst thou that yonder citizens assembled on the square will readily take me for thee?

GUILLOT-GORJU (handing him a surtout of old black velvet, and a great cloak of yellow mohair).

Pardieu! Put on my Algiers coat and mohair cape. You have, as I have, a black beard and wig. Your height and bearing are the same, and your melodious voice. Talk loud and shout, and they will be deceived.

THE MAN (putting on the surtout and cape). But what of thy man Tagus?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

'T is his instinct to see everything and say naught. Tagus will follow blindly where you choose to lead. Croix-Dieu! You courtiers know full well the art of training men like dogs.

THE MAN.

Retz could not talk more shrewdly. God, who dost govern us, Almighty God! of what avail to live in caves, if man doth sink as low in every point, in every sense, among thieves as among courtiers?

(To Guillot-Gorju.)

Before all things do not betray me, and return anon!

GUILLOT-GORJU (with theatrical emphasis).

My doublet ne'er concealed a traitor's skin!

THE MAN (smiling).

In truth thy doublet doth conceal the skin but sparingly.

GUILLOT-GORIU.

Fear naught!

(He picks up from the ground underneath the rags an old broken, dilapidated felt hat, adorned with a yellow plume, and presents it to the man, with a majestic air.)

Your lordship's hat.

(Calling Tagus, who has been at work on the booth throughout the scene.)

Tagus! Behold thy master!

(Tagus bows.)

Obev, be docile. He is another I.

(He dismisses Tagus with a gesture.)

(To the man.)

And do you set your mind at rest. However, I will not conceal from you that I am going hence. For men of our profession Paris is becoming hot.

THE MAN.

Damnation! Can it be, Gorju, that thou dost stop half-way on such a glorious road?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

The gentry at the Châtelet do make themselves ridiculous. Oh! by the way, are you a chiromancist?

THE MAN.

Just a little. 'T is a noble art.

GUILLOT-GORJU.

Aye, very noble, very ancient too. The art of reading in the hand what the soul hides. It often happens that great ladies—very great—come hither to consult me on the future.

THE MAN (astonished).

Often?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

Very often.

THE MAN. .

In the street?

GUILLOT-GORIU.

Upon this very spot.

THE MAN.

In broad daylight?

GUILLOT-GORJU.

They drop their veils. I draw the curtain close.

(He points to a hideous rag hanging on the poles.) And then I improvise.

THE MAN.

Come on! I'll make the trial.

GUILLOT-GORJU (pointing to the valise filled with phials).

Here are the elixirs.

(He opens the table drawer.)

And ink and paper if you choose to write a word or two.

(He picks up the clothes left by the man upon the floor, and makes a bundle of them which he puts under his arm, after selecting an ample brown cloak in which he envelops himself. He also puts on the man's new felt hat with waving plumes.) The hour is near at hand at which the citizens will pass. I go. Ah! now I think of it, I ought to give you warning. With my name you have a chance of being hanged, my noble lord.

THE MAN.

Indeed? And you with mine, my friend, of being decollated.

GUILLOT-GORJU.

In that case, God guard you!

THE MAN.

As thou seest, he has quite a task. Goodnight.

(Exit Guillot-Gorju. Left by himself the man sits down upon a block of stone, takes from his pocket the letter handed him by Guillot-Gorju, and reads it with apparent attention which soon changes to deep abstraction. Tagus meanwhile is putting the phials in order and sewing together the old rags that make the walls of the booth.)

SCENE II

THE MAN (alone, with his eyes fixed upon the letter).

A fleet in Gascony; an army in Piedmont; agents at Madrid.

(Raising his head.)

The queen has projects brewing in her mind.

(Musing.)

But this young girl! a star outside her sphere, what part has she in this tenebrious affair? This Mazarin is good for naught save to pollute whatever he doth touch. No, naught save that! How well these kings do choose their ministers! If anywhere, in some mean hovel, there exists a black-souled varlet, dreaming of the red barretta of a cardinal, a cheating knave, who licks at first the hand he 'll bite anon, false priest, false noble, with a dastard's heart, who forces king and people

to pass through his sieve, whose mind is no more than a potent menstruum,—if such a man there be, 't is he they seek, Bourbons as well as Valois! To sustain the people with just laws, to give vitality to everything, to throne and kingdom, they give o'er the state to him, from top to bottom, from the palace to the hovel, and make a chef de cuisine of a poisoner!

(Musing, with his eyes upon the letter.)

If we succeed, certes, we may obtain from Spain Franche-Comté, without war, without a single battle.

(He continues his perusal of the letter with an air of abstraction. Enter at the back of the stage the Duc de Chaulne and the Comte de Bussy, talking together in low tones, with an air of mystery; they do not see the man and are not seen by him.)

SCENE III

DUC DE CHAULNE, COMTE DE BUSSY, both in street costume. In a corner of the stage, THE MAN.

TAGUS, still in the booth.

COMTE DE BUSSY.

Oh!'t is a curious tale, upon my word. It was two years before the king was born.

DUC DE CHAULNE.

In thirty-six?

COMTE DE BUSSY.

E'en so. There is near Compiègne an old château built to deceive some stern duenna or some jealous husband, in a lover's interest, so cunningly the artist multiplied mysterious passages and secret doors, to give free play to subterranean intrigues!

DUC DE CHAULNE.

I know the place, my friend! Plessis-les-Rois. A ruined manor-house, deep-hidden in the woods, which, so 't is said, communicates with the château of Compiègne by a long passage underground, constructed during the last reign, then filled, and then by Mazarin reopened. The queen and he, alone, have access to the passage. There, by virtue of a dispensation got from Rome, the secret marriage that doth bind her to that man was celebrated. 'T is deserted, so that they can talk there undisturbed. Sometimes, they say, they hie them there to quarrel.

COMTE DE BUSSY.

True. At the time of which I speak there was at Compiègne a nobleman, whose

name I fear is now extinct, one Jean de Créqui.

DUC DE CHAULNE.

Pardieu! he was a pretty fellow!

COMTE DE BUSSY.

On the other hand the garrison at Plessis consisted of a sweet and lovely dame who lived in strict retirement. Jean knew the approaches to the manor, and by stratagem, love aiding, for he was no fool, he forced an entrance one fine evening to the fair one's citadel, and took her captive by assault. Later he learned, how 't was I hardly knew, that the same fair one was his brother's wife. I give thee facts, make of them what you will. For better or for worse, it is the fact that, nine months from that time, a child was born, a daughter, born legitimately and justifiably, the lady being duly married. But Comte Jean—thou seest, 't is a delicate affair.

DUC DE CHAULNE.

The fair one's name?

COMTE DE BUSSY.

Alix de Ponthieu. Methinks that she is now an orphan.

DUC DE CHAULNE.

Where 's her home?

COMTE DE BUSSY.

She lives a hermit's life, no one knows where. 'T is a rare thing at seventeen.

DUC DE CHAULNE.

And is she beautiful?

COMTE DE BUSSY.

As day. Thenceforth Jean's only passion was that child. His fate is ancient history. Ten years since he vanished from the scene, exiled for a conspiracy . . .

DUC DE CHAULNE.

Ah! I remember; Mazarin proscribed him, and the Luynes had his property.

COMTE DE BUSSY.

And, if he were to reappear to-morrow, the Grève would have his head.

(The two gentlemen walk on, talking, and leave the stage. Some moments since Tagus has drawn near to the man trying in vain to attract his attention; at last he decides to accost him.)

SCENE IV

THE MAN, TAGUS; afterward, CITIZENS, men and women.

TAGUS.

Master!

THE MAN.

Well?

TAGUS.

Shall I put everything in readiness?

THE MAN.

Aye.

TAGUS.

Soon the citizens will come, thou knowest, from the Marché Saint-Germain. So lend a hand, I prithee.

(The man assists him to lift the great drum upon the platform.)

THE MAN.

Beat the drum.

(Tagus begins to beat the drum. A few persons appear at the rear of the stage. After a few lusty blows Tagus stops, all out of breath.)

THE MAN (leaning against the platform, musing).
A woman in the plot! Mysterious!

(He turns to Tagus.)

Tell me, art thou the man to do a kindly deed one of these days?

TAGUS.

We should be fools, my master. Do what we may, a kindly deed, performed by men like us, casts an uncertain light, and ends too often in a slip-noose. Nor do I see that much is to be gained by it. However, do your will! So long as I have food to eat, I am content.

THE MAN.

Who thinkst thou that I am?

TAGUS.

A thief. To me it matters little!

THE MAN.

Tagus, knowest thou that, living as we do, some day we shall be strung up by our necks? We 're outlaws, brother!

TAGUS (seizing the drum-stick once more).

Let us not think of it!

(He beats the drum with great violence. A considerable crowd gathers around the booth, women, children, a few old men, and innumerable beggars.)

TAGUS (mounted on the platform, and shouting at the top of his lungs).

Holà! all ye who 'd lead a calm and peaceful life in this great city, peasants and bourgeois, come this way! come, nobleman and page! Who longs for health? who seeks good luck? we have them both to sell. Who does not know that pride, vice, love and fever, lawyers and nurses, ribald talk and foolish visions, interrupt the action of the constellations? Come to us! By our aid every man may trim his sails for happiness! Friends, nothing is so rare as a reliable astrologer. Manilas is obscure, Firmique is venturesome, the Arabian's wild talk is odious, Junctin would tell you everything, and Spina nothing, Cardan went all astray touching the King of England, Pontan is too Roman, Argolus too Greek, and Léonice and Pezel follow on behind.

(With a tremendous accession of energy.)

To find the hidden clue to nature's secrets, draw your horoscopes and tell your fortunes, to disclose to all the future, like Apollo, by the air, the earth, the water, by dead bodies, to bring down the manna and the dew from heaven, to fashion Ormuzd, wipe out Ahrimanes, cause a baron's wife to be enamored of a beggar, and recite the verses of the famous Scarron; to foretell to everyone complete success, for hyleg, antiste and triplicity, to change copper into gold before your very eyes! to sell for a mere song miraculous phylacteries! plumbago, storax, sublimate and mithridate; to guess a day, a date, an epoch, nobody, messieurs, no, nobody 's the equal of the great Guillot-Goriu, my master, here before vou! Jean Triteme is good for nothing but to kiss his slipper. Ptolemy's a fool, and Calchas is a knave!

(Sensation among the bystanders. Tagus, out of breath, steps down from the platform, and speaks in an undertone to the man.)

'T is thy turn, master. I will go meanwhile, and see what yonder clowns have in their pockets.

THE MAN.

Look you!

(He steps upon the platform. While he is haranguing Tagus circulates among the spectators, and feels deftly in their pockets, taking advantage of their close observation of the booth.)

THE MAN (with the tone and accent of an empiric).

Gossips, I have traveled far o'er land and water! atlases, world-maps and charts make mention of no country that I have not sought and found, roamed over and surveyed, and eke described!

(Tagus, having finished his first round, steps upon the platform, and, taking shelter behind his cloak, shows the man a handful of small coins.) TAGUS (in an undertone).

They 've naught but sous and liards, master!

(Turning indignantly toward the audience.)

Canaille!

(He steps down again and recommences his explorations.)

THE MAN (continuing).

The Indies I have seen, and China, and the great wall. I 've seen the King of Algiers, seated in his arm-chair, laugh and play at dice. Two beautiful embroidered birds sit on the chair-back, the gorgeous colors of their plumage mingling with the fringe.

TAGUS (emptying a pocket with each hand).

One drinks, the other eats.

(Aside.)

Still naught but sous!

THE MAN (taking a phial and showing it to the spectators).

Observe! a love elixir!

(To a rag-picker.)

Were you at Vienna, at the late court festival, madame?

TAGUS.

We were the darlings of Vienna! We were there!

THE MAN.

The Infante, as I now remember, was, upon my word, adorable in Hebe's guise. She wore a skirt of flaming silk of Tours; she went and came and laughed and filled the glasses round, and did most gallantly befuddle an Olympus of kings, dukes and archdukes, with a wine that was not taken from the aqueducts!

(He displays his phials to the crowd.)

Elixirs for the teeth, for fever and for syncope!

TAGUS (in falsetto).

Who 'll have a flagon? Who will have his horoscope?

THE MAN.

I come from Portugal! They have a youthful king—he 's but sixteen—and of a joyous humor, by my faith! When the Alcalde Obregon, now in disgrace, asked him this question: "How are we to rid your Grace of Count Valverde?" he said: "By killing him!" and said it with the glee befitting that sweet age.

(ln a melancholy tone.)

O youth! O springtime! O the azure sky!

(To the crowd.)

Who 'll have the oil of beauty?

(Leaning over toward his audience.)

Lily? jasmine? almond? rose?

TAGUS (with energy).

Speak out!!!

(While the spectators crowd around the platform, selecting, purchasing and paying, Tagus takes one of the citizens aside and leads him to the front of the stage by one of the huge buttons on his coat.)

TAGUS (confidentially, to the citizen).

My friend! my master is a sorcerer so skillful that . . .

(The points into the air with his finger, as if to call his attention to some object far away among the clouds.)

D' ye see yon bird?

THE CITIZEN (looking up).

No.

TAGUS.

Even so; my master, if it pleases him, will guide his flight according to the straight, the parallel or oblique sphere.

(He takes the citizen's purse from one of the pockets of his waistcoat.)

THE CITIZEN.

I do not see the bird.

TAGUS.

Look. Yonder in the sky!

(He takes his watch from the other pocket.)

THE CITIZEN (looking up).

No.

TAGUS.

You must have poor eyes, my man.

(Great tumult among the crowd. Enter a number of police officials, archers, gendames, exempts, footmen of the watch and provostry, led by a district captain. The crowd makes way. Tagus seems ill at ease.)

THE CAPTAIN (in a loud voice).

Which of the villains screeching yonder is Guillot-Gorju?

THE MAN.

I.

THE CAPTAIN.

Thou? Then we arrest thee, knave!

THE MAN (unmoved).

Aha! messieurs, you might speak more politely.

THE CAPTAIN (to Tagus).

Thou, begone!

(Three archers surround Tagus and drag him away struggling.)

THE MAN.

My servant too! Why? How?

THE CAPTAIN.

Monsieur Trévoux, Lieutenant of Police, intends to question thee himself and he can tell thee. He is close upon us. Here he is.

(Enters Master Benoît Trévoux, Lieutenant of Police, dressed in black, with a guard of sergeants.)

THE MAN (still upon the platform, to the crowd).

Gossips, be off. Monsieur le Lieutenant de Police Trévoux comes hither to consult me and to offer me his custom. We have matters of high import to discuss.

(He steps down from the platform, and salutes the Lieutenant of Police, then turns to the archers.)

Soldiers! introduce Monsieur le Lieutenant de Police, and close the doors.

(He draws aside the old rags which serve the purpose of a curtain. Benoît Trévoux enters the booth. The soldiers disperse the crowd.)

SCENE V

THE MAN, MASTER BENOIT TRÉVOUX.

(Two or three exempts inside the booth; outside, the police officers, stationed at the entrances to the square.)

THE MAN (eyeing the Lieutenant of Police from head to foot).

Are you mad, monsieur?

MASTER TRÉVOUX (dumfounded).

A civil question that!

THE MAN.

Monsieur le Lieutenant de Police et de ville, (Pointing to the archers.)

be pleased to send away these officers.

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

They are well placed.

THE MAN (courteously).

Your pardon. They are in the way and they are ugly. Well I know that one must take one's fortune as it comes. But pray, monsieur, what will my capture profit you?

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

The king will be obliged to me therefor.

THE MAN.

Nay, not to you, dear sir. Monsieur le Cardinal will take unto himself the honor.

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

He says true, the knave!

THE MAN.

Now, Mazarin detests you. He it is you serve thereby, and not yourself.

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

It may be so. However, I perform my duty. That 's enough. I must maintain good order, succor honest citizens, guard every door, and have an eye to every purse, eradicate thieves, beggars and brigands, and purge the public squares of bandits of thy kidney!

THE MAN.

These be wild words!

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

Go to! to prison, knave!

THE MAN.

You are a vandal!

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

To the Châtelet!

THE MAN.

So be it! I will cause a pretty scandal to avenge myself. Consider, ere you drive me to extremities, that I, Guillot-Gorju, know everything, see everything. For fifteen years have I lived, a man without fear and without reproach, my eyes deep in your secrets . . .

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

And thy hands deep in our pockets. Out upon thee, gallows-bird! thou shalt be tried.

THE MAN.

Such is your pleasure? Good! in open court, before the Châtelet, will I cry out upon

the housetops, 'mid a hundred epigrams, all that your wives are doing day and night.

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

Thou 'It be convicted; thou wilt be con-

THE MAN.

Look you, I'll say that you are . . .

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

Gorju!

THE MAN.

Proof in hand!

(Lowering his voice.)

You may be made to suffer for three rubies filched from the queen's treasure chest.

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

The thieves we 've caught have all been hanged.

THE MAN (in Trévoux's ear).

The rubies that you 've caught have never been returned.

MASTER TRÉVOUX (aside).

The devil!

(Aloud.)

Prithee what 's thy proof . . .

THE MAN.

Of what?

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

Of this thou dost advance.

THE MAN (with a majestic smile).

I never dwell on matters of this sort; 't is execrable taste. I leave such pedantry, for my part, to the king's attorney.

MASTER TRÉVOUX (to the exempts).

Stand you back a little.

(To the man.)

Let us talk more at our ease. How dost thou know this?

THE MAN.

'Faith . . .

MASTER TRÉVOUX (with interest).

Pray take a chair.

THE MAN (seating himself).

I know it, monsieur, as I know about a certain plot . . .

(Master Trévoux with a wave of his hand dismisses the exempts, who leave the booth.)

MASTER TRÉVOUX (anxiously).

A plot! good fellow, you astonish me!

THE MAN (unmoved).

In which you are concerned.

MASTER TRÉVOUX (with increasing alarm). I! no!

THE MAN.

'T is a great mystery. A prisoner . . .

MASTER TRÉVOUX (hastily).

Hold thy peace!

THE MAN.

So be it; I am well content to hold my peace.

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

No, speak.

THE MAN.

To what end did you take that prisoner one day by Compiègne, where the court was then in residence?

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

Pure chance!

THE MAN.

But all things go to show that you had secret dreams of a strange meeting. For, albeit Mazarin 's the object of your scheming, the explosion may perchance reach higher.

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

Hush! How know you that?

(Aside.)

This man is to be feared.

THE MAN.

I know what you all say in bed, at table and at church.

(He takes from his pocket the letter handed him by Guillot-Gorju.)

Look at this letter. Do you know the hand?

MASTER TRÉVOUX (glancing at the letter and turning pale).

I do not know it.

THE MAN.

Yes, you do.

MASTER TRÉVOUX (aside).

It is the queen's!

THE MAN (smiling).

Go to! fear not; what holds you back? Say boldly, as I do: "It is the queen's!" Examine the address.

MASTER TRÉVOUX (reading).

"To the King of Spain, my brother."

(Aside.)

Methinks this man must be the very devil.

THE MAN.

Read it, pray.

(He hands the letter to Trévoux.)

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

"I have received an onyx from the Pope, whereon is graven a monk's head. I have therewith made me a ring which I wear constantly . . ."

THE MAN.

Read on.

MASTER TRÉVOUX (reading).

"I count upon your kindly succor. To insure success to our designs, a squadron in the Gulf of Gascony, an army in Savoy will be enough."

THE MAN.

Read on.

MASTER TRÉVOUX (whose voice becomes more and more agitated).

"No one hath aught to say to me touching the prisoner. But Mazarin hath said, in bitter wrath, that rather than that child should reappear, he would himself, with his own hand, although a priest, and old and ill, put him to death . . ."

THE MAN.

Read on.

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

"Naught happens as I 'd have it, but I have upon my side Thoiras and Monsieur de Souvré. Trévoux, Lieutenant of Police, is with us . . ."

(Interrupting himself, pale as death.)

Whence hadst thou this letter?

THE MAN (replacing the letter in his pocket).

Bah! I have a many others. If aught should befall me, mark my words, someone would publish them, and then beware! So do not anger me, but guard my life.

(Master Trévoux, as if a violent contest were raging in his mind, stands musing for a few seconds, then turns abruptly to him, and offers his hand.)

MASTER TRÉVOUX.

Let us be friends!

THE MAN (taking Trévoux's hand, and putting on his hat).

Cinna, 't is my request to thee.1

MASTER TRÉVOUX (aside).

These charlatans have eyes that see through everything!

(Aloud, with an engaging smile.)

Tell me, my friend, art thou in need of money?

THE MAN.

Truly, my doublet has a many gaping mouths which say as much, for, 'neath the ample cloak whose folds envelop me, the devil doth with mocking finger cause my linen to protrude through holes undreamed of by the tailor.

(Master Trévoux takes out his portfolio, writes a few words in pencil, tears out the page and hands it to the man.)

Here is an order for eight hundred livres upon my privy purse, if thou wilt give me all the names, if thou 'lt disclose to me all the state secrets in thy knowledge; dost thou understand?

THE MAN (taking the paper).

A thief, it may be; but no spy, my friend.

(He tears the paper.)

(Master Trévoux draws aside the curtain of the booth, and dismisses the officers who have remained on the square.)

MASTER TRÉVOUX (to the officers). Begone!

(They obey in silence. The square is once more deserted. Master Trévoux approaches the man with an expansive air.)

Now let us talk, where none can overhear. (Sound of footsteps in the neighboring street.)

Great Heaven! someone comes!

THE MAN.

'T is pity, you were waxing very loving.

(From a narrow street at the left, opposite to that taken by the officers, a woman comes into the square; she is dressed in black and heavily veiled. She looks behind for an instant with evident uneasiness, as if she dreaded being seen, then rushes hastily into the booth.)

SCENE VI

THE MAN, THE VEILED WOMAN, MASTER TRÉVOUX.

(As the woman enters, Master Trévoux wraps himself in his cloak and takes his seat upon Tagus's stool in the farthest corner of the booth, with his back turned to the light, like one who is not anxious to be recognized.)

THE VEILED WOMAN (to the man, not noticing Trévoux).

My friend, a single word. Pray look and see if any come behind me?

THE MAN.

No.

THE VEILED WOMAN.

I am not followed!

THE MAN.

No, madame . . .

THE VEILED WOMAN.

'T is well.

THE MAN (aside).

Who is this woman?

THE VEILED WOMAN.

Thou dost draw their horoscopes for all who call upon thee?

THE MAN.

Yes, madame.

THE VEILED WOMAN.

'T is well! in that great science, and 't is that whereof I stand in need, the lowlier the man, the higher doth his vision soar. He points our course though he knows not our names. I come to seek thy counsel. I am to be pitied. Listen . . .

(Spying Master Trévoux.)

Who is yonder man?

THE MAN.

He is my servant. Have no fear. Your hand, so please you.

THE VEILED WOMAN (giving him her hand).

Look. What seest thou there?

THE MAN (aside, scrutinizing a ring which glistens on her hand).

Ah! can it be? the onyx whereon a monk's head is graven! 'T is the queen!

THE VEILED WOMAN (intensely excited).

Seek and ponder well, O subtle intellect! Conceive a haughty brow bowed down beneath a most degrading yoke!

THE MAN (removing his hat, and going to the curtains at the back of the booth, and drawing them together).

Allow me to draw close these curtains for your Majesty.

THE VEILED WOMAN (turning as if acted upon by electricity).

How canst thou know me?

THE MAN (unmoved).

'T is your hand that doth betray your Majesty.

THE VEILED WOMAN.

My hand that doth betray me? how, I prithee?

THE MAN.

By its beauty. 'T is a royal hand. white and rosy hand.

(Aside.)

The onyx ring was a great help.

THE QUEEN.

'T is well; say on!

THE MAN.

You have a hundred reasons for your suffering, O queen! being the link that joins two families which draw you constantly in opposite directions at the same time, unable to shake off their yoke. Spain has your ancestors, and France your progeny. You suffer with the vanquished e'en as with the victors you rejoice. The Louvre contains more poignant sorrow still for you; for you did foster him who now doth rend you. Mazarin, by you created, now doth plot your ruin. Day by day you fall to pieces, stone by stone and noiselessly. The mind of Mazarin's the only window through which the king looks. With that vile traitor's eyes doth he view everything, and, filled with mad infatuation for the precious cardinal, he fain would wed his niece, Olympe Mancini. You are cast aside, your bitter plaints are laughed at, and those joyous feet are walking o'er the ruins of your power. You would be revenged, however, you would become once more the queen and mother, you would strive and strike and punish; but your days are haunted by depressing visions, and your dreams at night do drive the color from your cheeks.

THE QUEEN (gazing at the man with a mixture of fear, curiosity and profound wonder).

Wretch! who hath told you this?

THE MAN.

I see it. Know, madame, that in a little time the secrets of the great fall down by

their own weight. The people have an eye wide open at the bottom of your soul.

THE QUEEN (raising her veil).

Then pity me! my tears in very truth do scald me. Ere the month is past, the king, my son, will reach his sixteenth year, and they will conclude this shameful marriage.

THE MAN (in an undertone).

At the same hour another will attain his sixteenth year, madame!

THE QUEEN (turning pale).

Of whom, in God's name, dost thou speak? My friend, you dream.

THE MAN (lowering his voice more and more, and speaking with deep meaning).

'T is said that his resemblance—to someone you know—is fairly terrifying.

(He gazes fixedly at the queen, who turns her head away in dismay.)

THE QUEEN (aside).

Who is this man? O God, those eyes would pierce the darkness of the tomb!

(She turns suddenly toward him, and looks him in the face.)

E'en so, dost thou, dread seer, who knowest everything, know what Monsieur le Cardinal did say to me the other day?

THE MAN (impassively, emphasizing every word).

He said that—he, an old man,—ill,—a priest,—rather than see him reappear in life,—albeit an old man must shudder to lay hand upon a child,—that he with his own hand would kill . . .

THE QUEEN (interrupting him, in dire alarm).
One whom I bid thee not to name!

THE MAN (continuing).

A captive!

THE QUEEN (beside herself).

Hush! thou dost appall me. Saw I not thy gleaming eyes, I well might think that I do dream, and hear the awful voices of the dead, who sometimes speak! Who art thou, in God's name?

THE MAN.

You see. A juggler in the public streets.

THE QUEEN.

But tell me, pray! hast thou seen visions? Knowest thou what kings do say . . .

THE MAN.

And what they do. My skill is boundless.

THE QUEEN.

I have faith in thy keen, searching glance. What shall I do?

THE MAN.

Time serves the man who waits. Be ever ready for what may befall. Possess your soul in patience. Let things take their course; let God's hand, filled to overflowing with events to come, open and pour them forth upon these many brows, awake or sleeping! You will have your share therein. Each one will have his share.

THE QUEEN.

Mon Dieu! time flies, I must return! Relieve me from my dire perplexity. I fain would make my way back, by the gate that opens on the wood, to the château, incognito. that no one may have knowledge of my flight. That gate by Trévoux's men is guarded. What to do?

THE MAN.

I can assist you. 'Twixt ourselves, my servant counterfeits Trévoux's safe-conduct.

THE QUEEN.

Can it be?

THE MAN.

Know you his writing?

THE QUEEN.

Yes.

(The man opens the table-drawer, takes therefrom the pen and paper to which Guillot-Gorju called his attention and gives them to the Lieutenant of Police, who has maintained his original position throughout the scene, sitting upon Tagus's stool with his back turned and now and then glancing furtively at the queen.)

THE MAN (to Trévoux).

· Quick! Write: Allow this lady and her suite to pass.

(The Lieutenant of Police writes, the man takes the paper and hands it to the queen, who examines the handwriting with astonishment.)

THE QUEEN (reading).

"Signed, Trevoux!"

(Aside.)

I verily believe the man 's a sorcerer.

(She takes the onyx ring from her finger, and gives it to him.)

Look, keep this ring in memory of me. When thou wouldst speak with me, at Saint-Germain, the Louvre or Compiègne, wherever I may be, show this to gain admission.

(The man, with his knee on the ground, takes the ring and places it on his finger. The queen motions to him to look out into the square. During the scene it has grown dark.)

Is no one passing by?

(The man raises the curtain, then returns.)

THE MAN.

Madame, 't is evening, and the bourgeois have retired to their homes.

THE QUEEN.

Adieu.

(She leaves the booth in haste. As soon as she has gone, the man goes straight to Master Trévoux, who rises.)

THE MAN (in a grave, stern voice).

Monsieur, it must be clear to you, that one of us, without pretense of virtue, holds in the hollow of his hand the other's head, and you are not that one. I can undo you. So,

begone, you and your spies, and come not here again. If I espy a gendarme, I denounce you. Go, I deign to say to you, monsieur, that I like you have secret projects of my own, and I am not the man you seek. Your secrecy will be the gauge of mine. Keep silence therefore, upon every point! Remember, too, that traitors ever come to grief in their own trap. So, no sly tricks. Is it agreed?

MASTER TRÉVOUX (with a bewildered air). Agreed.

THE MAN.

Then give me back my servant.

MASTER TRÉVOUX (aside, with a terrified glance at the man).

I have achieved a masterstroke! I thought to lay my hand upon a worm, and caught a snake. Who is this demon of a man?

THE MAN (dismissing him with a gesture). Begone.

(Exit the Lieutenant of Police. The man looks after him for a few moments, then sits down pensively upon the block of stone. At the back of the stage the Duc de Chaulne and Comte de Bussy re-enter at the point where they left the stage. They come forward, talking together, without noticing the man, and unseen by him.) THE MAN.

The night has fallen.

DUC DE CHAULNE (to Comte de Bussy).

The strange story of thy Jean de Créqui haunts me, and my brain is filled with thoughts of this Alix de Ponthieu.

COMTE DE BUSSY (pointing to the street leading into the square on the left).

Look, look, 't is Brézé, roaring like a tempest.

DUC DE CHAULNE (looking).

Ah! meseems he 's in a howling rage!

COMTE DE BUSSY.

He did not read until to-day the libel that has gone abroad, wherein 't is said that, when he was at Nimes, he stole.

DUC DE CHAULNE.

Ah, yes! 't was Mazarin, they say, who first did whisper the anonymous report.

(Enter the Comte de Brézé and Vicomte d'Embrun in street dress. M. de Brézé is apparently in a towering rage. He holds in his hand a pamphlet, with which he gesticulates violently. At his noisy entrance the man turns and espies the four gentlemen, but is not observed by either of them.)

SCENE VII

THE SAME: COMTE DE BRÉZÉ, VICOMTE D'EMBRUN.

COMTE DE BRÉZÉ (to M. d'Embrun).

What care I for the picture of the vices of the present day? My only thought, a keen and biting grief,

(He crumples the pamphlet angrily in his hands.) is this strange, infamous, degrading, stupid insult, for which I cannot take revenge,—and yet for which I needs must take revenge!

VICOMTE D'EMBRUN.

Be calm. Look, pardieu, here are Chaulne and Bussy, who are likewise out of humor with thy Mazarin.

COMTE DE BRĖZĖ.

Bah! out of humor! I am incensed beyond endurance!

COMTE DE BUSSY.

So are we, no less than thou.

VICOMTE D'EMBRUN.

We nobles have been so humiliated, that to-day the Mazarin doth smite us with impunity. Chaulne has lost his office.

COMTE DE BUSSY.

I, my regiment.

COMTE DE BRÉZÉ.

But, Embrun, the most deadly insult, a-"thou liest!" or a blow is nothing, on my oath, when one can take his critic by the collar, as is meet 'twixt well-born enemies, and say to him: "Come!" Sure it is that, should Uzès insult Elbœuf, or Gontaut make

sport of La Trémouille, or Albret treat Fontraille with disrespect, no one of them is tonguetied afterward; they are brave men, and what they 've said is said. And on the morrow, in the teeth of laws and regulations, and of Master Jean, the headsman of the marshals' court, they hie them to the fields, with gleaming eye, the purple flush of anger on their brow, with head erect and naked sword; and there deal blow for blow, take blood for blood; 't is well;—thou dost reprove them, I applaud;—lions they are and tigers, terrible but great, magnificent to look on in the reeking hippodrome, where they do gallantly give back the blows they gallantly endure! But a mere clown! a blackguard! a vile rascal who picks up a stone wherewith to break my windows! An Italian monk, a base befrocked adventurer, a gallant who would fear to face the laundresses upon the quay, and who, his wondrous courage to display in all its vast sublimity, borrows another's claw, and therewith scratches me! A wearer of the cope! a beggar, by my halidome! who vents his filthy slaver on me in the dark, the while he says his pater, and insults me with the senseless drivel of a scurvy pamphleteer, paid at three sous the page! Aha! the mitred villain, the vile shaven traitor, who doth set his dog on me, and lie perdu himself,-may I be deemed a heartless, soulless clown, and I do not tomorrow cause him to be castigated like the blackguard that he is, by six stout lackeys armed with *nerfs de bæuf*, before the statue of King Henri on the Pont Neuf!

DUC DE CHAULNE.

A noble thought, upon my word. I 'm with you.

COMTE DE BUSSY.

I will go and take my stand upon the footway to applaud, with beggars, citizens and passers-by!

DUC DE CHAULNE.

I will supply the lackeys.

COMTE DE BUSSY.

I the weapons.

(Some moments before, the man has left his seat and softly approached the gentlemen from behind, unseen by them; as their excitement increases he lays his hand familiarly upon M. de Brézé's shoulder.)

THE MAN (with a smile, to M. de Brézé, who turns about in amazement).

To chastise a cardinal of the Church of Rome, a minister who holds France in his hand and leads her where he will, to break a nerf de bæuf across his back-bone, Brezé, is a noble, yes, a royal thing to do but 't is by no means easy to be done.

(The four noblemen gaze at one another in amazement.)

COMTE DE BUSSY.

Whom doth this villain with his yellow cloak address?

VICOMTE D'EMBRUN.

I prithee, Chaulne, lend me thy stick. To be accosted thus by knaves one knows not is too much.

THE MAN (unconcernedly).

I am Jean, Comte de Créqui, Baron de Vaize; my 'scutcheon or with a wild plumtree gules. In time of war, my family, without resorting to the arrière-ban, gathered

beneath its standard Blanchefort, Vaize, Agoust, Montlor and Montauban. On my mother's side, —a Farnese—a grandee of Spain, and admiral under King Louis Treize; such was I formerly. But now, of less importance in the kingdom than the lowliest peasant, banished by Mazarin ten years since, the wreck of a great nobleman, whereon the Ducs de Luynes grow fat, a price upon my head, in hiding, all alone, a wanderer, without supporters, friends or kindred; such am I to-day. That said, is it your pleasure that we talk together?

(The gentlemen approach him with great eagerness of manner.)

COMTE DE BRÉZÉ.

Créqui, thy hand! Great God! the same hard lot brings us together. Me they dare insult, they dare to banish thee!

COMTE DE BUSSY (scrutinizing M. de Créqui with the air of a man searching his memory).

Yes, 't is Créqui in good sooth. Thy memory is not yet dead among us.

(All shake hands warmly with Comte Jean.)

DUC DE CHAULNE.

We were speaking but a moment since of thee.

COMTE JEAN.

Gramercy, messieurs.

VICOMTE D'EMBRUN (examining Comte Jean's costume with admiring gestures).

Comte Jean! if one would recognize you, may I die! You are disguised!

COMTE JEAN.

Nay. Aged. To turn a poor man gray, Brėzė, ten years of exile equal twenty years of life. Messieurs, what would you have, what is your aim? Revenge? I bring it you. For God's sake make less noise and play a stronger game! I hold for a consummate ass the

gambler who at every word thumps with both fists the table, foams with rage, and curses brelan or quinola, shricking about the gold he loses and the cards he holds. Through all this din the hidden blade is sharpening. A Henri Third need never languish for a Guise. And so, by stealth or manifestly as the case requires, attack a Richelieu in broad daylight, a Mazarin at night. To-day the mine, tomorrow the sword-thrust. One-half the battle must be fought in ambush. Therefore, Brézé, calm thyself, make no disturbance, but take my advice, say nothing and retain thy post in the king's household. Have no fear, 't will be a mighty struggle. If some one of you should ask what end is served by these vile rags I borrow from the birds of night, that is my secret. I intend to keep it. Furthermore, this costume is the type of this ignoble, cozening, deceitful age! an age wherein naught waxes great except the public shame! wherein our eyes, whichever way we look, see none but jugglers, charlatans, buffoons! A farce wherein the honor of all men is forfeited! mine, yours! Retz is upon one trestle of the stage and Mazarin upon another. Austria, as prompter, holds the manuscript. And so, messieurs, since France, lost to all sense of shame, is in the hands of low-born actors,

(He goes to the table on which are the glasses.)

I, Jean de Créqui, nobly born and outlawed, do turn mountebank! So far as there is need I will, like any reprobate, cause scandal and commotion on the public highways; and, as if I were in my own person court and parliament and treasury, the Fronde, the clergy, the Sorbonne, the University, aye, and his Eminence himself, will terrify you all with my bold, shameless laugh! Ah well! think you, messieurs, that this insulting parody is my true object? No. My heart is stout, I succor the oppressed, I flout th' oppressor, but the

censor's taste for cutting I have not; and though sufficiently enamored of my grotesque rôle, I shall to-morrow, if I can, throw off this mask. "But," you will say, "certes, it is your purpose, from a cloudless sky to cause a thunder-bolt to fall and strike down Mazarin, to give us our revenge, and, lastly, to recover your inheritance?" Not so, messieurs. Although the blood flows swiftly 'neath my doublet, I am too far gone in years for my wrath to mount so high; and, although Mazarin is like to fall because of what I do,at least, I hope so, and I so believe, -revenge is not my object. Victor or vanquished, this, in a word, is what I have at heart. Although ten years in banishment, my heart was here in France, yes, my whole heart, alas! and all my hope,—a child,—my happiness, my duty, my remorse, a ray which shone long since upon my gloomy brow, and which was true to my bowed head when every other light was veiled! A child, to-day a maiden. But why weary you with details, which concern myself alone? Moreover, this sad secret is imprisoned in the tomb. The humble, spotless dove herself knows not, nor ever will, why I do love her Messieurs, 't is ten long years, ten years this very month, since I have seen that angel! But now, ah me! I cannot live if I hear not her voice, sweet music that doth stir my soul, if I see not her eyes, the torches that do guide my straying glances,-if, in short, I have her not. Ah! pity the poor exile! All about her have deserted her. Methinks I told you that she is an orphan? She has need of me. For four years past my letters have been intercepted—I have lost trace of her, I know not how. Where dwells she at this hour? I cannot say. O God! to see her once again,-I weep for her! That I might be allowed to live in France,-to be with her, I begged, implored, aye, did a hundred craven things; I told Mazarin that he was a great man, and wrote a letter to the king from Rome and from Madrid. But no! they did not choose to give me leave to come. Thereon I said in my own mind: "'t is time that this were ended!" That is why, an outlaw, I have come to Paris, why, in this strange garb, degrading livery, I have embarked upon a grim and arduous enterprise, wherein God helps me on, and which, perchance, will change in one brief moment, with a terrible, far-reaching shock, the shape of France, the face of the whole world.

(A moment of silence.)

Now I have done. Ask me no questions. Recognize me not, nor follow where I go. But cloak your wrath in silence and be ready for the day when, from the darkness bursting suddenly upon your frightened eyes, I shall

cry out: "Come! all is finished. Hasten! for the work is done."

COMTE DE BRÉZÉ

Rely on us.

(The four gentlemen press his hand anew, in silence, with renewed warmth.)

COMTE JEAN.

I do rely on you. Adieu. The hour has come when I must be alone.

(He escorts the four gentlemen to the street leading from the square, then returns to the front of the stage, and relapses into a state of profound absorption. The lamplighter enters, lights the lamp, and passes on.)

COMTE JEAN (musing, with his head in his hands).

This unknown woman!

(It has become quite dark. Lights appear in the windows of the houses. Tagus enters at the back of the stage, and rushes up to Comte Jean with an expression of joy, not unmixed with awe.)

SCENE VIII

COMTE JEAN, TAGUS.

TAGUS.

Thanks, master! But for thee I had been Thanks! for to thee I owe my liberty. They told me so! And, master, mark my words; the gipsy, savage creature that he is, lives for the man who gives him life, and dies for him who saves him. So it is that I am thine, and where thou goest I will follow thee. Take one end of a red-hot iron bar, and I will take the other, and I 'll say: "Behold this gallant gentleman; I love him, for had it not been for him I should be now asleep for good and all! Had it not been for him, I should be swinging to and fro upon the gallows in the evening breeze, as if a tree had caught me by the hair as I passed by, and brushing with my feet the shrubs beneath me! I belong to thee.

COMTE JEAN.

'T is well. And I do count on thee. Now go. TAGUS.

The Louvre is the king's, the booth is ours. I must take it with me.

(He sets about pulling the booth to pieces in great haste, takes down the poles, unfastens the hangings and bestows them all in the little hand-cart, where he also piles up table, chairs, bass-drum, and all the juggler's paraphernalia. Comte Jean pensively watches him.)

COMTE JEAN.

Where shall I meet thee?

TAGUS (still at work).

Near the door of the Orme Sainte-Geneviève. COMTE JEAN.

Good; hasten.

TAGUS.

By the way, the sergeants are a paltry lot. Seen from afar they make a monstrous fine appearance, but when one gets nearer to them, (He takes from his breeches' pocket a letter, which he hands to Comte Jean.)

master, I found naught but this in all their pockets.

COMTE JEAN (unfolding the paper and reading it by the light of the lamp at the street corner).

"You can safely trust the bearer of these presents. Signed, MAZARIN." Oho! in an emergency this may well be of service.

(He puts the paper in his pocket. Meanwhile Tagus has completed his labors, and the booth with its contents is upon the cart. He walks up to Comte Jean and takes his hand.)

Go. COMTE JEAN.

(Tagus harnesses himself to the cart and exit dragging it behind him. As soon as he has disappeared Comte Jean looks toward the corner of the square pointed out to him by Guillot-Gorju.)

Nothing as yet!

(Returning to the front of the stage.)

Perchance—but no.

(Three hand-claps are heard in the darkness.)

At last! It is the signal!

(Raising his voice.)

God alone is master. Compiègne and Pierrefonds!

(A female, quite young, with a long veil of black lace, enters, from the farther end of the square, at the point designated by Gnillot-Gorju, and comes forward cautiously and slowly toward Comte Jean.)

SCENE IX

COMTE JEAN, THE YOUNG GIRL (veiled.)

THE YOUNG GIRL (beneath her breath). Is it you, my friend?

COMTE JEAN (also lowering his voice). 'T is I, madame.

THE YOUNG GIRL.

Are you alone?

COMTE JEAN.

Alone. Be not afraid.

THE YOUNG GIRL (walking up to him). What news?

COMTE JEAN.

All goes as well as we could wish. Fetters and iron bars alike we 'll break. Since Pierrefonds is his prison-house the prisoner is saved; for I know Pierrefonds well. Some friends of mine, disguised as soldiers and as harlequins will bear me aid. There is no risk. If you are certain of the jailer you have bribed, we may, with no great difficulty, set him free. I will be answerable for our good success.

THE YOUNG GIRL.

I shall be able to assist you to gain access to the donjon. Thus: last week the doctors said that, if he never looked upon a human face, the prisoner, despite their watchful care, would die of ennui; that his close imprisonment is killing him, and that it is essential that he be, at least, permitted to hear singing in the room adjoining. For this duty, the sole remedy to cure the grief that eats his life

away, I caused myself to be selected, thanks to the jailer I have bribed, whose daughter I am thought to be. On the appointed day, myself within and you without, my friend, if God is on our side, will crush those terrifying walls, then we will fly, and give back home and happiness and air and light and life and courage to the prisoner.

COMTE JEAN.

Once free, we must look to it that he be not taken. Where will you conceal him?

THE YOUNG GIRL.

Friend, among the woods near Compiègne—from Pierrefonds north a league—I have an old château, of vast extent, and filled with secret hiding places, Plessis-les-Rois; a mansion far from any town, built as a place of refuge in the civil wars. There was I born, and there, alas! my mother died. Since then no one has lived there. We will take him there by secret paths that I alone do know.

COMTE JEAN (who has listened with constantly increasing agitation).

Great God! madame, you are Alix de Ponthieu!

THE YOUNG GIRL.

I am. But how know you?

COMTE JEAN (falling on his knees).

in the room adjoining. For this duty, the Madame! in Heaven's name! upon my sole remedy to cure the grief that eats his life knees do I appeal to you. Madame! the

risk, I swear to you, is very great. Have done with this most perilous and tragic enterprise! I am not he for whom you take me, but a man who saw you born, alas! and who since then has suffered cruelly, consumed by bitter thoughts; a former servant of your noble mother, who, keeping silent, as he must, touching his rights, his mission, comes to make atonement to her in your person; a poor wretch, whose wish it is, if God accepts his services in your behalf, to take away your suffering and give you joy instead; whom you can never call by any name; a lion to defend you, and a dog to worship you!

THE YOUNG GIRL.

Monsieur!

COMTE JEAN.

A moment since you called me friend! I am an old, gray-bearded soldier, and I weep! Judge then of that that 's in my heart. Oh! madame, trust me. Have a little pity and a little faith. Come 'neath you lamp that I may look at you.

(Alix draws near the lamp, and he gazes at her with a something very like adoration.)

How you have grown, and oh! how fair you are! What joy to see you once again! Ten years have passed! ten years of suffering! To-day you cannot recognize me. Aye, in that self-same château, where no one dwells, Mon Dieu! I saw you as a child, a little child, no higher than my knee, with rosy cheeks, running about among the flowers, in the fields, in the bright sunlight! Poor dear child! Oh! pray deem me your friend! Upon my soul, I say naught but the truth! Why, once upon a time, madame, when gipsies and Zingaris frightened you, you ran to me!

ALIX.

Yes, I remember.

COMTE JEAN.

Ah! you see! So let my voice deter you! You, a mere girl! Why, he who puts his finger on the bolts and bars of a state-prison risks his head! It is a fatal scheme! a crime! 't is downright madness! You, aim a blow at Mazarin himself! And what 's this prisoner to you?

ALIX.

I love him.

COMTE JEAN.

You do love him?

ALIX.

Think you I would act thus for reasons of state?

COMTE [EAN (aside).

Ah! fate has seized me never to relax its hold, e'en as a tiger seizes on his prey!

ALIX.

'T is true, I love him! and I feel that I am sent to succor him. Abandoned, in my childhood, to paid guardians, an orphan, friendless, with no loving hand to foster and protect me, I had but the fields and skies to study, and I passed my life dreaming in solitude. 'T was thus that God, far from the busy haunts of men, my heart so moulded as to make of it the fit recipient of a strange love. Do you, who love me so, and whom God sends to me, hear what I have to tell. The road from Montdidier to Roye passes a manor where I lived last year. One night the escort of a certain prisoner, whom I had seen approaching, made demand upon me for my dungeon, that their charge might pass the night therein. As mistress of the manor, all my keys are at the service of my suzerain, and I obeyed. Impelled by curiosity I ventured, in the night, to glide unnoticed to the dungeon, by a passage way of which I knew the issue. Through the barred wicket came a ray of light. I never shall forget what I then saw. The prisoner was walking back and forth beneath the low arched ceiling. Doubtless, although you ne'er have seen him, you have heard how awful is the aspect he presents? In the half-light I could distinguish four gaunt keepers. No one spoke. 'T was like a tomb. I, paler than the brow of him on whom the axe is soon to fall, gazed, paralyzed with horror, through the bars. How long a time did I remain upon that spot? I cannot say. At daybreak guards and prisoner had vanished like a dream. What more have I to tell? Delusion though it be or madness, and my project wise or fatal, 't is the fact that since that day one thought has lived in my devoted heart. Where'er I go that prisoner like a shadow follows, passes close to me and stretches out his arms, then fades away into the darkness. I will set him free. Who is the wretched victim? Surely he is young; and he is guilty of no crime. By what right do the executioners who have him in their midst change his existence to a hideous dream? What is the mystery? To be quite frank with you, by dint of taking pity on him I have come to love him. I have learned that he has been transferred to Pierrefonds, and I choose to rescue him and I will rescue A hundred times I 've told myself all this that you would tell me; that 't is madness, down-right lunacy, that I know nothing of him. that I might select some young and handsome nobleman. And then! I love him! Yes, to set him free is my one aim, an ardent, feverish, unalterable purpose that doth fill my heart! My God, I see him always there before me! By what name you call my state of mind I know not, but I feel that I do love him!

COMTE JEAN.

Pitiful illusion! Alas, my poor, dear heart, you never knew a mother's counsel.

ALIX.

Oh! he suffers so! Have pity on him.

COMTE JEAN.

'T is not possible that you have ever seen his face.

ALIX.

I dream of it.

COMTE JEAN.

And dream you also of the scaffold and the Grève, the frowning judges, grim purveyors for the tomb, and the death sentences read out by torchlight?

ALIX.

I must save him, or succumb myself. Such is God's will. His dungeon I will open,—or my tomb.

COMTE JEAN.

Oh! go no farther—for full well I know you go to death,—in this impossible, insane, pernicious plan! By your dead parents, by their souls and yours, by the hidden bond that binds us to each other, you, still a child, to me, who soon shall be an aged man, I do beseech you, Alix,—and forbid you!

ALIX.

But there is a voice from heaven that bids me persevere. Whoever you may be, I cannot disobey. Your prohibition is of no avail. Hark ye, my friend: even if my father, Monsieur le Marquis Paul de Créqui, and my mother, that dear innocent who fell asleep before her time, should come forth from the grave to bid me pause, may God forgive me, I would not obey!

COMTE JEAN.

Ah, well! go forward! God alone knows where your steps will lead you. I have naught to do henceforth but follow you, assist you, love you, give my life to you, and not survive you.

ALIX.

I shall look for you to-morrow.

COMTE JEAN.

At what hour?

ALIX.

At midnight.

COMTE JEAN.

And the place?

ALIX.

Behind the arsenal.

COMTE JEAN.

I will be there.

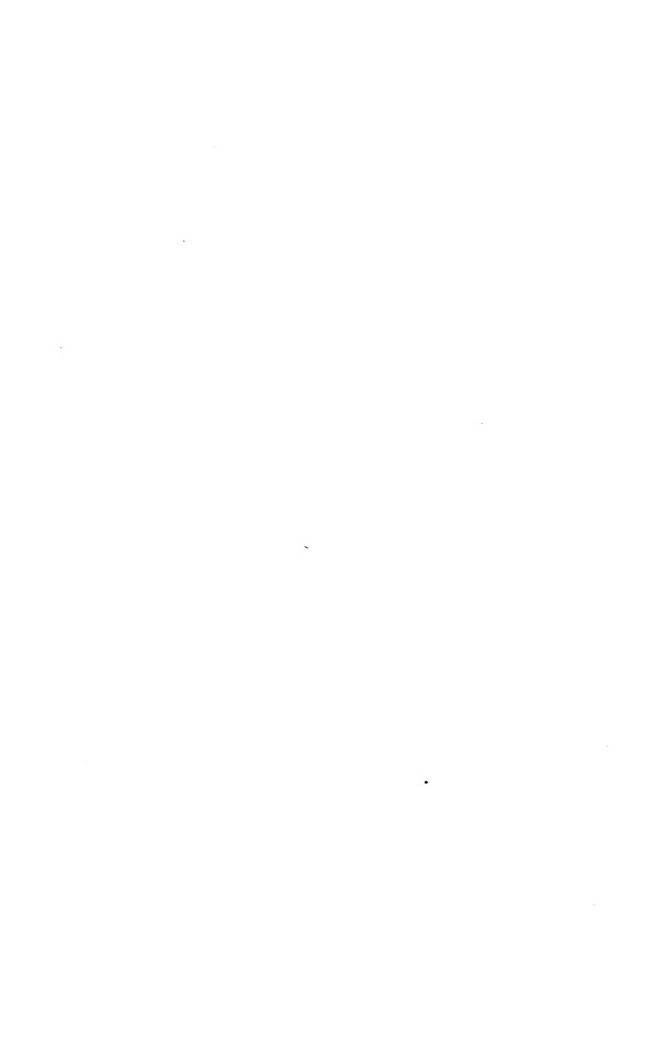
ALIX (offering him her hand, which he takes and presses to his lips).

'T is well.

(Exit Alix. He falls upon his knees.)

COMTE JEAN.

O God, who art the hope of every stormtossed bark, protect this child whom fate doth whirl away into the darkness!





ACT SECOND

A very dark room, with ogive arches and floor of large flagstones, hung with scarlet velvet with gold fringe; furniture consisting of great arm-chairs with gilded arms and backs upholstered in tapestry; the appearance of the room is gloomy and at the same time magnificent. At the left, in a jog-piece, a large bed with curtains of red damask and tapestry in alternate stripes, a canopy supported by posts, and a head-piece of carved gold, and covered with a lace coverlid. At the right, in another jog-piece, a high chimney-piece, with a backing consisting of a plate of iron adorned with fleurs-de-lis. This plate is so large that it entirely fills the back of the fire-place. Also at the right, a table with a velvet cloth, standing upon a square Gobelins carpet. On the table a Venetian mirror. Above the bed a large figure of Christ in ebony, not of the shape affected by the Jansenists, that is to say, with outstretched arms.

In a corner at the right, close by the table, a part of the hangings has been torn aside, disclosing the bare wall, on which can be seen strange figures cut in the stone; a long nail lies upon the table.

The chamber is lighted by a single long-barred window at the back, to which three high stone steps lead. The ray of light coming through this window is distinctly marked upon the floor. The embrasure of the window shows the enormous thickness of the wall.

As the curtain rises a strange figure is seen standing by the table. At first glance there is nothing to give a clue to the age or sex of this figure, which is enveloped in a long gown of violet velvet, the head being entirely encased in a black velvet mask which hides the hair as well as the features, and reaches to the shoulders. A small iron padlock secures the mask behind. When the gown is thrown partly open, it discloses garments of black satin and a youthful shape. The prisoner seems to be absorbed in a sorrowful reverie.

At the back of the stage, above the window, in a small, dark gallery which runs all around the dungeon just where the arch begins, and which communicates with the dungeon by a sort of ladder-stairway of gilded wood against the hangings at the left, can be indistinctly seen the form of a white-haired, gray-bearded halberdier, with a black bandage across his face, which covers one eye. This man, standing motionless and silent as a statue in the shadow, holds in his right hand a long pistol, in his left a naked sword; his halberd, resting against one of the ribs of the arch, glistens in the half-light behind him.

Above the stairway, at the left, an iron door, half-hidden by a rich portière.

SCENE I

THE MASK; THE SOLDIER (in the background).

THE MASK (raising his head heavily, and speaking with an effort).

For life!

(He turns his head as if looking about him.)

A tomb! And I but sixteen years of age!

(He walks with dragging steps toward the back of the stage, and apparently directs his attention to the light from the window reflected on the floor at his feet.)

How pale this ray of light, how slowly doth it crawl across the floor!

(He seems to count the flagstones, and take some measurement with his eyes.)

Ah me! the fifth flag is still far away!

(Ile listens.)

No sound.

(He returns hurriedly to the front of the stage, and continues with an outburst of despair.)

To live in two dark cells at once, both day and night! For so it is: my keepers—what is thy design, O Lord?—have placed in one my body, my face in the other. Oh! this mask is the most frightful of the two.

(He seems to view himself in the Venetian mirror on the table.)

Sometimes a hideous phantom terrifies me in this mirror as I pass, and walk to meet my image. 'T is myself! And so, when I do show myself behind the window-bars I see the laborer in terror fly.

(He sits down and muses.)

Not even sleep doth set my soul at liberty. E'en in my dreams no friend doth ever call me by my name. When, in the morning, I go out, I am no man who goes and comes and talks and laughs, instinct with joy and pride, but just a pensive dead man living in my coffin. Oh! 't is horrible! Long, long ago—when I was yet a child—I had a spacious garden, where I used to go at dawn, and where I saw the sunbeams and bright colors, and the birds and golden butterflies at play among the flowers! Now!...

(He rises.)

Oh! I am forced to suffer a most shameful martyrdom! God help me! there be tigers who have said: "We will lay hands upon this feeble, innocent and comely child, and put a mask upon him, and confine him in a tomb! There he will grow to manhood, feeling the instinct of a man instilled into his being drop by drop, e'en through the massive walls. The coming of the spring will make his pulses throb within his tower of granite, like the tree, the plant, the young bird in its nest; with pallid face will he, from his dark cell, watch the barefooted women passing in the plain; and then, to banish ennui, he will pass his time in picturing his dreams by figures carven with a nail upon old walls, and thus will wear away his heart in futile things; ye, wrinkles, will plough furrows on his brow for naught! The weeks, the months, the years will flow on, his eyes will sink into his head, his hairs will whiten; and by slow degrees,

beneath his never-changing mask, will be become the puny spectre of a man! So that the day will come, when, having ne'er been young, he will awake to find himself an old, old man, a terrifying thing to his own eyes!" Ah me! I am an old man even now. My heart is weary! Child in my childish terror, old in thought, never a man! O God, thou hast no pity!

(He throws himself into a chair, spreads his arms upon the table and rests his head upon them, as if in a frenzy of despair. After a moment's silence he rises with difficulty, and goes once more to examine the patch of light, which has meanwhile moved imperceptibly across the floor.)

It has not yet made half the journey.

(He lets his head fall forward on his chest in deep dejection, and falls to musing again.)

O my mother! how I would have loved you!—I am stifling!

(He goes to the window, ascends the steps and looks out.)

God! how joyously you white-wreathed smoke mounts upward in the sky! How now! man binds his sheaves, the bee distills its honey, the river flows, the clouds sail by, the tower-swallows fly where'er they will, and nature thrills and sings in the deep forests; everything is filled with melody and murmuring voices, everything is sweet and lovely on this earth of ours; and no one tells the world, and no one cries aloud to men: "You all are happy! you are free! But yonder in that donjon keep, confined behind grim bolts and bars, deprived of the fresh breeze and the warm sunlight, envying the poorest but its smoke, a prisoner languishes whom prison walls will kill, whose name is known to none, whose face no one has seen, a living mystery, a ghost, a riddle, with no glance for others, no sunshine for himself! A sad and hopeless prisoner, O height of woe! who weeps and cannot even wipe away his tears!

(He returns to the front of the stage.)

Oh! for a single day to bathe my hair, my breast, and my uncovered face in the free air which fills all space, and then to die! But no, that can be never! Execrable mask!

(He tries to tear away his mask with his hands.)

Never, to spread my wings and proudly soar aloft toward heaven through the boundless azure sky, could I break thee in twain, thou ghastly chrysalis! O hell and fury!

(He sits down and lets his head fall upon the table, and sobs audibly. After a few morents he raises his head once more.)

But that angel voice! oh! let me not blaspheme! The hour draws near.

(He goes again to see what progress the patch of light has made.)

The ray of light will soon have reached the mark I made on the fifth flagstone.

(Returning.)

Her approach soothes all my dark imaginings to sleep, and in my heart I feel a boundless love!

(A few chords are struck upon a lute, apparently in the adjoining room.)

'T is she! I hear her!

(He falls upon his knees.)

Blessed be thou, O God!

(Profound silence. A voice is heard from the same direction singing to the accompaniment of the lute. The prisoner listens, kneeling, in a sort of ecstasy.)

THE VOICE.

In the gloom where thou dost languish Heavenly choirs thine ear greet.

Let not grief augment thine anguish!

Thy mind doth form a dream so sweet,

That thy heart will soon complete!

E'en the darkness hath its gladness For the soul in agony; Stars and roses, foes to sadness, Bloom at once in earth and sky, Blest by the same God on high! O'er the hillside, wrapped in slumber, Where by day the sun hath shone, Hear the sweet sounds without number! Music of the night, my own, Floating upwards to God's throne.

Cease, O cease thy sad repining, That thou canst not see the light, For the sun will soon be shining, Morning ever follows night; Darkness veils true love from sight.

THE MASK (on his knees, with his face turned toward the fire-place whence the song seems to come). O come! (The plate at the back of the fire-place turns slowly upon itself, like a door. A ray of light shines through the opening, upon which the Mask gazes steadfastly as if fascinated, saying in a low voice:)

Oh! come, come now!

(A woman dressed in white appears in the opening. It is Alix. Behind her is a jailer holding a lantern, the light from which shines into the dungeon. The Mask, still kneeling, gazes at the female form surrounded with light, as if it were a vision.)

SCENE II

THE MASK, ALIX; at the back of the stage, in the fire-place, THE JAILER; above, in the gallery, THE SOLDIER.

(Alix gazes at the prisoner, her eyes overflowing with love and compassion.)

THE MASK.

She comes! how beautiful she is! And oh! for light and life and joy with her!

(Clasping his hands.)

Oh! fascinating creature, woman, apparition, let me worship thee, for a celestial ray, as of a meteor that flashes through the sky, shines from thy lustrous eyes upon my awestruck heart! for as I look on thee I see my God! Thy head that dares to visit this illomened spot is crowned in my eyes with a wondrous aureole; for thou must be an angel, aye, the most angelic of all angels, thou who dost come day after day to this abhorrent dungeon, and, a gentle presence 'mid these frowning walls, dost breathe into the heart of the poor captive, masked and fettered, such great store of love, despite the hate that doth encompass him! 'T is now a month since first thou didst come hither, and each day I am more ravished than the last!

ALIX (walking toward him).

My friend!

THE MASK (without rising).

Come now, O lovely maiden, undefiled, come, let me gaze upon thee, let me kneel to thee! Before all, swear that thou wilt come

to-morrow! Give me thy hand! Oh! would that I might kiss thy hand! thy fascinating hand, so pretty and so white!

(He presses Alix's hand to his breast.)

Ah! but the Lord hath placed a month behind this mask, a heart beneath this shroud.

(He rises.)

I am well fitted to alarm thee, am I not? I was alone just now, awaiting the glad hour when God doth send thee to me. Forgive me! I have cursed that God to whom I owe my only joy! It seemed to me—thou seest I did count the seconds,-that the strip of light took much more time than usual to reach you And then this hateful mask-these hellish walls. One who had seen me then might well have deemed me mad. My mind strayed off I know not where, in search of lovely visions, gardens, flower-strewn fields, where swarm the bees, whose wings I envy them; I wept and listened for thy steps; and now I laugh! But thou dost see it not. Madame, you are most beautiful and fascinating.

(He leads her to the arm-chair.)

Sit you there and let us talk. If all the livelong day, my heart, I had thee by my side, e'en here in my dark tower, I 'd laugh the livelong day. You are my love! In very truth I felt that I must see thy face!

ALIX.

O misery! Whene'er I enter here, my heart is sore oppressed. Unhappy man!

THE MASK.

Nay. Say not so. No more sad words, for I am happy now. O thanks! I see thee. Is it not enough that I do see thee? Ah! I fear that something may occur to scare away the joy that sings in my sad heart when I do hear thy voice, e'en as a bird that takes its flight at the least sound!

ALIX.

How I would like to see thy face!

THE MASK (taking her hand).

Thy hand! I claim it for my own!

(Alix, spying the soldier stationed in the gallery, rises, runs to the jailer who has remained on guard in the fire-place, and points to the soldier with evident anxiety.)

ALIX (in an undertone, to the jailer).

That man?

THE JAILER (interrupting her, in an undertone).

Is with us. He is yours, madame.

THE MASK (leading Alix back to the chair, and making her resume her seat).

I know not why she constantly doth leave me thus. I love thee and I fain would look at thee; stay there.

ALIX.

But we must talk of graver matters. Listen. It is time. My visits, long mysterious, yet have a purpose.

THE MASK.

And that purpose? . . .

ALIX.

Is to set you free.

THE MASK.

O Heaven!

ALIX.

And I have the means.

THE MASK (falling on his knees).

O God! my prayer is granted! Liberty and love! 't is all of life! They are the two rays, denied to the accursed, with which thou dost illume thy paradise!

(He rises.)

A free man! I, a free man! O entrancing thought!

(To Alix.)

But how wilt thou proceed? The tower is well guarded. Nay! tell me nothing! What care I? I trust thee, for to angels such as thou art nothing is impossible! Oh! will it be soon?

ALIX.

Perhaps. I hope so.

(She goes to the jailer and speaks in an undertone.)

When will be the time?

THE JAILER (in an undertone).

Not yet.

ALIX (in the same tone).

But when, my master?

THE JAHLER (in the same tone).

The court 's at Compiègne. We might spoil everything. 'T is not the time for such a stroke. Anon.

ZLIA

You will assist me?

THE JAILER (aside, after a gesture expressive of his fidelity to her interests).

Have no fear! I 'm no such fool! The lady gives me everyday for every tête-à-tête, ten louis. I propose to earn them for a long while yet to come. The man 's an idiot who wrings the goose's neck that lays him golden eggs!

ALIX (to the Mask).

You err in thinking me the daughter of this man. No, I am nobly born, and of the house of Créqui. My name is Jeanne-Alix de Ponthieu. I am akin to Chateaupers, to Rohan, and to Guise. Among my ancestors were dukes and peers, marshals and admirals, and constables of France.

THE MASK (as if speaking to himself). And mine were great men too!

ALIX (joyously).

So much the better!

THE MASK.

Woe is me!

ALIX.

Methiuks, now that you speak of ancestors . . .

THE MASK (as if suddenly roused from his reverie).

1? no!

ALIX.

You always said that you knew not your name.

THE MASK.

'T is true, I know it not.

ALIX.

Nay, do not lie!

THE MASK.

My angel!

ALIX.

I would know . . .

THE MASK (interrupting her).

Nay! nay! hell wreaks its vengeance on me! Ask me nothing. On the day when I was born into the world, my crime was consummated and I was condemned! Question me not! I come of an ill-fated family, and even as I speak to thee I feel that I grow pale.

ALIX.

This secret . . .

THE MASK.

Is so heavy that it well might crush thee.

ALIX.

Let us share it.

THE MASK.

Never! One should not impose such burdens upon those he loves.

ALIX.

This vault may fall and erush me! I would know thy name!

THE MASK (rising, in a state of intense excitement).

Listen. I will not tell it thee! thou shalt not know it! 'T was for having whispered it to me an old and faithful servant lost his life: this martyrdom I undergo for having heard him whisper it! Ah me! why was the fatal secret ever told to me? I lived beneath the starry sky, a lowly child; I had no name, but I had liberty, the fields and the green trees and nature and the sunlight; I had God before my eyes, upon my brow and in my heart! As soon as this dark secret, like a bitter draught, was poured into my soul, my heart was filled with gloom. They saw that I had learned my name, for I was sad! One night, I was in bed, men came to take me, and I fled barefooted from the room; I swooned. When I awoke, my memory returned but slowly, but I had a sense of something pressing on my face. Soon after, passing near a mirror, I recoiled in horror; I had seen myself! And ever since that day I dwell in darkness. Ever since that day with mournful eries I pray to God to give me back the vanished light!

(Wildly.)

Am I a man? Have I a name? No other than myself can answer yes, and I say no!

(To Alix.)

Art thou, who comest to my dwelling-place, full sure that thou hast now before thy eyes aught else than an unreal vision? Who dares speak to me, to me, of flight? Ye living, leave the dead in peace in their dread realm!

This mask 's my face, I am a phantom! Oh! I die! air! air!

(He falls in a swoon upon the chair.)

ALIX (supporting him in her arms).

This ghastly mask doth stifle him.

(To the jailer.)

Have pity on the wretched man!
(Pointing to the band held in place by the padlock.)
Unlock this padlock!

THE JAILER.

'T is a capital offense, madame!

ALIX.

What! to remove the mask an instant?

THE JAILER.

Yes.

ALIX.

'T is infamous!

THE JAILER.

And then Monsieur le Gouverneur will be here presently upon his round.

ALIX (feeling in the pocket of her skirt).

O God be praised! I have my purse.

(She takes out a purse and offers it to the jailer.)

Twenty louis d'or to let him breathe at ease a single instant!

THE JAILER (taking the purse after some hesitation).

As you please.

(He selects a small key from his bunch, and is about to insert it in the padlock.)

ALIX (leaning over the prisoner, who is still unconscious).

Oh! oh! this mask is more oppressive to myself than him. At last I am to see him! to release him!

(For some moments the soldier stationed in the gallery has seemed to be watching more closely what is taking place below him. As the jailer inserts the key in the lock, while Alix, filled with joy, mingled with anxiety, holds the prisoner's head in her hands, the soldier suddenly leans over the balustrade of the gallery and discharges his pistol at the prisoner; the bullet shatters the mirror on the table at his side. At the report, all turn about in dismay, and at the same moment the iron door of the dungeon is heard to open.)

THE JAILER (turning toward the soldier).

Ah! traitor!

(The door is thrown open. Enters M. de la Ferté-Irlan, Governor of Pierrefonds, attended by turnkeys and soldiers.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN, TURNKEYS, SOLDIERS.

THE SOLDIER (in the gallery).

To arms! help! search the jailer!

(At a sign from the governor the soldiers surround the jailer and search him.)

ALIX (aside).

God in heaven!

THE SOLDIER.

In his pocket is a purse containing twenty louis—count and see!—which he received before my eyes from madame, for removing the man's mask. I had my orders and I fired on him.

(The soldiers find the purse.)

A SOLDIER (after counting them).
Twenty louis d'or!

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

A woman here! what means? . . .

THE JAJLER (in deadly terror, to Alix, under his breath).

A man you bought! so much for trusting to such knaves!

THE SOLDIER (to the governor, pointing to Alix).

I let her enter. To perform my duty thoroughly I wished to hear all, that I might know all. But when I saw that 't was their purpose to unmask his face, I thought it better to cry halt.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

'T was most judicious.

(He hurriedly closes the padlock, and puts the key in his pocket; then he turns to the soldiers who surround the prisoner.)

Put this man in close confinement; leave the woman here, that we may question her.

THE SOLDIER (to the governor).

I would be glad to say a word in private to monseigneur.

(He comes down from the gallery as the soldiers are removing the jailer.)

THE JAILER (shaking his fist at him).

Traitor!

(Exeunt the jailer and his guards. M. de la Ferté-Irlan dismisses the other turnkeys with a gesture, and turns to the soldier who has taken his stand beside him at the front of the stage.)

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

Well?

THE SOLDIER (pointing to the barred window).

Be pleased to walk to yonder window, monseigneur.

(M. de la Ferté-Irlan goes to the window and ascends the steps.)

Now shake the centre bars.

(M. de la Ferté-Irlan shakes the bars indicated by the soldier; they come away in his hand and leave a wide open space.)

What say you to it?

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (examining the bars which seem to have been neatly sawed, and artistically replaced).

But for thee! . . .

THE SOLDIER (going to the window).

Send for the soldier to come hither whose halberd you see shining at the tower's foot, down yonder.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (looking out).
'T is the sentinel.

THE SOLDIER.

Stationed beneath this window. Yes.

(M. de la Ferté-Irlan opens the door of the dungeon, and gives an order in a low voice to the turnkeys who have remained outside the door, then returns to the soldier, who has come back from the window to the front of the stage.) M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

My worthy friend, the king is much indebted to thee. Tell me, dost thou know the woman's name?

THE SOLDIER.

No.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN, 'T is—a plot!

THE SOLDIER.

I think as much.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

I will take care that thou art paid and well rewarded.

THE SOLDIER.

Ah! here is the soldier.

(Enters Tagus, in uniform, a knapsack on his back, surrounded by the turnkeys.)

SCENE IV

THE SAME: TAGUS.

THE SOLDIER (to M. de la Ferté-Irlan) Permit me, monseigneur.

(To Tagus.)

Come hither, knave!

(Tagus comes forward, gazing at the soldier in the utmost amazement.)

Let him be searched before Monsieur le Gouverneur. At once and without pity. In his sack he has a rope-ladder.

TAGUS (whose wonder seems to increase).

I do not understand.

(They search his knapsack, in which they find a ropeladder provided with holdfasts.)

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

'T is as thou sayest.

THE SOLDIER (uncoiling the ladder, to M. de la Ferté-Irlan).

If it pleases you to try it for a moment, you will find that it 's just long enough to reach the ground from yonder opening.

TAGUS.

I understand but little of all this.

THE SOLDIER (to the turnkeys, turning toward Tagus).

Perchance he may escape. Secure the beggar better. Bind him fast.

(Hitherto the Mask has seemed to be in a sort of stupor; at this point he turns his head as if looking about.) THE MASK (as if he were speaking in a dream).

Great God! What does this mean?

(The jailers bind Tagus's arms behind his back. Ile makes no resistance but seems dazed.)

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (pointing to Tagns).
To the dungeons!

THE SOLDIER.

Monseigneur, permit him to remain.

(To Tagus.)

Thou shalt be hanged within the hour, villain!

TAGUS.

Excellent. I understand it less and less.

(At a sign from the governor the jailers lead Tagus to a corner of the stage, whence he looks on with an anxions air. Alix is completely crushed. The Mask seems turned to stone.)

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (taking the soldier aside, in an undertone).

My friend, it was their plan to set the prisoner free, 't is clear.

THE SOLDIER (in an undertone).

The garrison is purchased to a man. His Eminence had warning of the peril yesterday, and sent me hither instantly The danger's imminent.

(He takes from his pocket a folded paper which he hands to the governor to read.)

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (reading).

"You can safely trust the bearer of these presents. Mazarin." Enough. What wouldst

thou have me do? Speak for thyself. In my name give such orders as thou wilt.

ALIX (aside, looking upward).

O God, have mercy!

THE SOLDIER (to the turnkeys, in a loud voice).

In the king's name, let all the garrison, at once and for good reason, be ordered to return to the château. Secure the entrance to the donjon. Venture not to leave a single sentinel without. Up with the drawbridge, lower the portcullis. Bring us the keys. Your heads will answer for it.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (to the turnkeys).

Do you hear? Obey.

(Exeunt the turnkeys.)

THE SOLDIER (to M. de la Ferté-Irlan).

The garrison, who are all armed and numerous, must be secured with care. It may be that to-night they will attempt a *coup de main* to carry off the prisoner by force. To-morrow we shall have a reinforcement.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

Thinkst thou so?

THE SOLDIER.

His Eminence doth send us thirty archers of his own guard. At break of day they will be here. Meanwhile we two must keep the tower. We have still full many schemes to guard against, and we may be compelled, perchance, to undergo a siege.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

'T is well. Let us entrench ourselves here in this room, my friend.

THE SOLDIER (pointing to the iron door). Is yonder door secure?

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

To burst it in they must have cannon.

ALIX (aside).

Woe is me! all hope has vanished!

(Enter the turnkeys with lanterns. Night has fallen during the foregoing scene.)

A TURNKEY (handing a bunch of keys to the governor).

Every door is locked. Here are the keys.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (taking the keys and attaching them to his belt).

Let no one leave the château.

THE TURNKEY.

They all are under lock and key.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (in an undertone, to the soldier).

What wouldst thou now that we should do? Are these men to remain?

THE SOLDIER.

No. I distrust them. By your leave we will interrogate this rascal.

(He points to Tagus.)

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (to the turnkeys).

Go.

(The turnkeys obey. The governor closes the iron door and throws the bolts with his own hand, then returns to the soldier.)

We are alone. No one can reach us here. Thus we are safe . . .

THE SOLDIER (pointing to the fire-place, which has remained open since Alix's entrance).

Ah! pardon me. Someone might come upon us through that opening.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN (walking to the fire-place).

'T is true. Ah, yes! through here the lady entered. Let us make it fast.

THE SOLDIER (detaining him).

The plate is a thick sheet of metal. No one save the jailer knows how it is made to

open, but the conspirators might well have recourse to it.

M. DE LA FERTÈ-IRLAN.

Whither does it lead?

THE SOLDIER (peering through).

To a dark chamber, with no fire-place or window; in the shadow I can see an open door.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

So! go and close it.

(The soldier obeys and passes through the opening.

A noise as of a key turning in a lock is heard in the darkness beyond the opening, then the soldier reappears with two keys in his hand.)

THE SOLDIER.

The keys were in the lock.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

What of the bolts?

THE SOLDIER (going through the motion of throwing bolts).

Well home!

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

I fear some trap, some stratagem. Didst thou securely fasten everything?

THE SOLDIER.

I did. But go yourself and look.

M. DE LA FERTÉ-IRLAN.

That will I.

(He passes out of sight through the opening into the darkness beyond.)

ALIX (aside).

All is lost!

(The soldier follows closely upon the governor's heels, and as soon as the latter has disappeared, he burriedly pulls the plate back into place; it closes with much noise. Then he tears off his white wig and black bandage and faces Alix, Tagus and the Mask, who gaze at him in stupefaction. It is Comte Jean.)

COMTE JEAN.

Nay, all is saved. 'T is 1! The jailer was not true to you, and broke his word. Last night,

(To the Mask.)

while you were sleeping, with my faithful Tagus here, I sawed the bars through and prepared the ladder. Now all is done. The garrison is under lock and key; the governor the same; the jailer in a dungeon;

(To the Mask.)

and you at liberty. Now let us go.

(Wild outburst of joy. Alix runs to Comte Jean, seizes his hands and presses them to her heart.)

THE MASK (with effusive gratitude, to Comte Jean).

May God reward you!

TAGUS.

Ah! I understand.

ALIX.

Accept my thanks!

COMTE JEAN.

My joy 's as great as yours.

ALIX (kissing his hands).

Dear friend!

COMTE JEAN.

But we must hasten, for time flies.

(He cuts Tagus's bonds with his dagger, then picks up the ladder which is still lying on the floor.)

The ladder to the window!

(He runs to the window, fastens the ladder to the bars, and drops the end outside.)

TAGUS (taking from the table the keys of the room in which the governor is confined).

The keys into the moat!

(He throws the keys through the window.)

THE MASK (to Comte Jean).

Remove the mask! oh! quickly!

COMTE JEAN.

First of all, I conjure you, let us go hence. The night is very dark. We have to walk two hours through the woods. I will not take it off until we reach Plessis-les-Rois. Your safety first of all. Oh! let us go!

(To Tagus, who is busy securing the ladder.)

The clothes?

TAGUS.

Are down below.

COMTE JEAN.

Where?

TAGUS.

In a thicket.

COMTE JEAN.

Good. Now hasten we.

(The governor can be heard pounding violently on the plate at the back of the fire-place.)

Aye, pound!

ALIX (gazing joyfully at the Mask).

O bliss! he 's free.

COMTE JEAN. (He takes from his pocket a portfolio and a pencil, and writes upon his knee.)

Here you will find Monsieur le Gouverneur.

(That done, he tears out the leaf and fastens it to one of the nails riveted into the metal. Then he goes to the window and examines the ladder.)

(To Tagus.)

Is it firm?

TAGUS.

Oh, yes!

THE MASK (to Comte Jean).

Your name?

COMTE JEAN.

That you shall know anon.

(The governor continues to hammer upon the plate.)

Ave, good man, hammer on!

(He motions to them all to go to the window.)

(To Tagus.)

Do thou go first.

(Pointing to Alix.)

You next.

(To the Mask.)

And you. I will go last.

(Tagus climbs over the window-sill, places his foot on the ladder and passes down out of sight. Alix follows him, assisted by Comte Jean.)

COMTE JEAN.

O God, have Alix in thy keeping!

ALIX (descending, and half out of sight behind the wall).

Save the prisoner, O God!

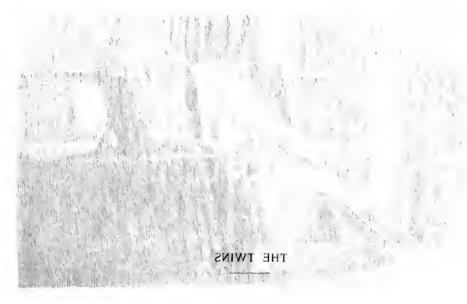
(The Mask descends in turn, and just as Comte Jean places his foot on the ladder the curtain falls.)





Vachel in

Marke 10



ACT THIRD SCENE I

and 1 Liss your Majesty's hand.

Come, monsieur,

A salon, were manifecent, now dilapphated, rich largers, storm and inreadbase. Architecture and furn in of the time of Hengaid adult hubital h

As the childin rises the Queen Moher, King Louis V.V. Med Car Main Market 229 G.M. the stage. The queen landbrase difficulty deliberary layers a with each process, and the late the necks in the heart powers a magnificent count of gold brocade, with the blue ribbon, and with white plumes, sword with diamond hill, lace ruff and sleeves. He is a well-favored youth. The cardina who coughs constantly, and is pale and shattered by illness, has the appearance of an old man, although he is really less than sixty.

Two candelabra are upon the table.

SCENE I

THE QUEEN MOTHER, THE KING, CARDINAL MAZARIN.

(The queen is standing by the table with her lead foreinger resting upon it. The cardinal cands behind her in an attitude of respect. The king is looking about in amazement at the dilapidated condition of the salou.)

THE KING

Hadame, you call this place Plessis-les-Rois? | Monsicur to Cardinal of course may hear.

(He examines the dusty arms hairs)

Why, I should say it had been unin to the for nigh a hundred years.

Tar ing again to the queen.

If your Majesty has aught to say, I become for security Cardinal of course may hear.

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THE TWINS

ACT THIRD SCENE I

and I kiss your Majesty's hand.
(To Mazarin.)

Come, monsieur.

THE QUEEN (gazing at the floor, without booking up at the king)

Alas!

lazarin approaches the tible and takes a can liestick. At the same time he leans over to

THE CARDINAL (in an undertone to the queen).

We needs must have an explanation, undisturbed. I will return anon.

The king kisses the queen's hand, bows low to her and takes his leave, preceded by the cardinal carrying the light.)



ACT THIRD

A salon, once magnificent, now dilapidated; rich draperies, torn and threadbare. Architecture and furniture of the time of Henri IV. Old-fashioned, high-backed chairs with the gilding worn off. Great cobwebs are hanging to the carved and painted timbers of the ceiling. Two large full-length portraits, covered with dust, one of Louis XIII., the other of Cardinal de Richelieu, face each other on the wall. The hangings are blue, covered with the letter H and gold fleurs-de-lis, interwoven with the crest of the Créquis. At the back of the stage a wide door surmounted by the wild plum-tree (créquier) beneath a ducal crown. At the right, in a jog-piece, folding-doors. At the back a table stands at the corner of the opposite jog-piece. At the left a window, beside which is an old screen; at the right a table and a chair. Everything has the damp and gloomy aspect of an apartment many years uninhabited.

As the curtain rises the Queen Mother, King Louis XIV. and Cardinal Mazarin are upon the stage. The queen is dressed in black with jet ornaments; the cardinal wears a long gown, red cap and stockings, but has no hood; he has the blue ribbon about his neck. The king is quite young; he wears a magnificent coat of gold brocade, with the blue ribbon, hat with white plumes, sword with diamond hilt, lace ruff and sleeves. He is a well-favored youth. The cardinal, who coughs constantly, and is pale and shattered by illness, has the appearance of an old man, although he is really less than sixty.

Two candelabra are upon the table.

SCENE I

THE QUEEN MOTHER, THE KING, CARDINAL MAZARIN.

(The queen is standing by the table with her bent forefinger resting upon it. The cardinal stands behind her in an attitude of respect. The king is looking about in amazement at the dilapidated condition of the salon.)

THE KING.

Madame, you call this place Plessis-les-Rois? | Monsieur le Cardinal of course may hear.

(He examines the dusty arm-chairs.)

Why, I should say it had been uninhabited for nigh a hundred years.

(Turning again to the queen.)

If your Majesty has aught to say, I listen. Monsieur le Cardinal of course may hear.

(The queen assents with a movement of her head.)

You brought us, such at least I understand to be the case, to this deserted spot that we might talk together without witnesses. 'T is well. You might have chosen a more fitting place, but I complain neither of place or hour, nor of the very cold and grewsome passageway, through which we had to pass to reach this charming spot. I listen to your Majesty with filial submission.

THE OUEEN.

Sire, I have, in truth, full many things to say to you. And first of all, the treaty of London and of Paris, though kept secret, hath leaked out and doth disturb men's minds; the emperor doth marvel at it, and the Catholic king is sore displeased. Let me explain myself. The Genoese do cozen you, and the Tunisian pirates do lay waste Provence and are not punished. A king should be beloved at home and feared abroad. Do not disturb yourself concerning your return to Compiègne, if it be late.

(She points to the door at the right.)

There is a room adjoining this which I gave orders to make ready for your Majesty. I resume. Money is lacking. We are ruining ourselves in fêtes. Monsieur de Richelieu caused heads to fall, but as a great statesman should, in broad daylight, with head erect.

(She points at Mazarin.)

But monsieur kills and hides his head; and I know many a pavement that is dyed with blood and washed again while all is dark. The Holy Father's very old; but no negotiations have been entered into with the cardinals, in preparation for a conclave. All are for the Euglish or the Huguenots. It is a crying shame! But I would fain explain my meaning without wrath. To make a colonel of a gallows-bird,

(Pointing at Mazarin.)

a kinsman of monsieur—a knave, a cur, he hath aggrieved the Dauphin regiment. These three days past they 've marched to the Louvre barriers with lowered pikes, so sorely hurt are they. This stirs all Paris to its centre. Well it is, that you 're at Compiègne, and know naught of it. But I tell you all. A flame is smouldering in the provinces; nothing in reason has been granted to the princes; 't is a mere patched-up peace of theirs, and I do greatly fear the crash. The dukes are angry and the Parliament is out of patience. Even over me an arm of iron, sire, is outstretched; within my own four walls I am no longer mistress. Boisthibaut, my valet, has been taken from me. Bread is dear. In one word everything goes ill. We aim at nothing great, do nothing wise: your enemies are all looked kindly on; and so it is the state is ruined. 'T is beyond all doubt. Ask Monsieur the First President!

THE CARDINAL (in an undertone to the king, with an imperceptible shring).

Sieur Mathieu Molé!

THE QUEEN.

I seem to you o'erwrought; but ask Monsieur le Maréchal d'Estrées; Madame de Targis, one of my maids of honor, whom the late king, my lord, esteemed most highly; ask De Thou, of all men the most pure in these distracting times! Souvré! or Councilor Ledeau!

THE CARDINAL (in an undertone to the king).
Poor fools!

THE QUEEN (to the cardinal).

What are you saying there beneath your breath? Insulting words?

THE CARDINAL (with a low reverence). I say that they are very worthy men.

THE QUEEN (pointing her finger at the cardinal).

But, sire, every day this man encroaches on your rights! All France is in commotion! Europe anxiously looks on! The good coadjutor 's a man of mind! See what is said! see what is writ! The Duc de Beaufort . . .

THE CARDINAL.

Retz and Beaufort! Rebels both.

THE QUEEN (to the king).

Read Maynard, Coffier, Guy-Joli . . .

THE CARDINAL.

Libelers!

THE QUEEN.

In God's name, hold your peace, monsieur! a truce to your bold speech! One cannot say a word, for you talk all the time.

THE CARDINAL (bowing to the ground). Speak.

THE QUEEN (furiously).

No, I say no more!

THE CARDINAL.

Sire, may I reply?

THE KING.

Say on.

THE CARDINAL.

We have no treaty with the English. Genoa? Three millions have been given back to us. And Tunis? At this moment thrice one hundred pirates hang trembling in the ocean breezes on the coasts of France. The Parliament? A hot-bed of anarchic aspirations! I maintain their privileges; their decrees have lost their force. As for the claims put forward by the dukes and princes, let us speak of them, I ask no better. Fine things we shall see. Monsieur de Nevers would appropriate the salt-tax of the Rethelais. Beaufort aspires to raise regiments unhindered in your Majesty's domains. Indeed, he even

now parades a corps of infantry at Nantes, who march about with banners waving, trumpets sounding. Elbouf for his bastard son has dreamed of nothing greater than a duchy and a seat in Parliament. The Comte de Soissons, whom your power offends, aspires to grant patents of nobility. Rohan has raised your standard over Thouars, but beneath his own. Monsieur de Bouillon demands Sedan, and that the king do bind himself to force Turenne to swear allegiance; furthermore the right of free assemblage for the Huguenots. Monsieur le Prince's modesty doth give us cause to tremble; he but asks, after so many civil wars, your pardon, with some two or three poor towns. D'Épernon has his eye on Poitiers; D'Aiguillon on Nogent; Vendôme would have exalted rank, and Conti cash. Even to the younger branches the whole tree is mercenary. "Pay my debts," says to the king Monsieur de Mercœur. Chabot, by virtue of a score of doughty deeds, revives his captainry at the old château of Blois. And, lastly, to conclude the catalogue, Monsieur le Chancelier would have his wages doubled, and the dear Duc d'Agen intrigues for nothing more than to secure a marshal's baton for his brother, the order for his son. So much for that.

(The king turns gravely toward the queen.)

THE QUEEN (to the cardinal).

Pardieu! monsieur, you triumph with great ease. Dukes, princes, peoples, Paris, Tunis, Genoa, Rome, which is left to go its way, and London, which takes heart of grace, whatever you may say and all that I have said, are all the same to me!—for death is in my heart! But this I say, this I proclaim, that 't is a monstrous thing that a mere nobody, a nameless girl, your niece, God save the mark!—whose ancestors, methinks, were poor clerks

ŕ.

at Palermo, should dare to cast her eyes upon my King of France! that never were such horrors seen before! that sixty kings and forty emperors are smitten by this man upon the cheek! that Austria and Bourbon are by him dragged in the mire! that I shall be despoiled against my will! that 't is detestable, impossible, incredible, that you should take to wife a beggarly Mancini; that I will not have it so! in fine, that 't is rank infamy!

THE KING (with an offended air). Madame . . .

THE QUEEN (partly facing Mazarin).

O God! that man! Ah me! What agony I have endured! To forward his ambition he would go to hell! Thus doth a viper climb e'en to the eagle's nest! O Jesus! when I think how great the shame, how many nights I 've passed at Saint-Germain, alone upon my balcony, my head upon my hand!

THE KING.

Madame . . .

THE QUEEN.

Ah! those were wretched days. Such marriages do always end in misery, believe me, my dear son!

THE CARDINAL (with a reverence).

I know full well all that I owe the queen, and hold my peace. Although my niece is of good family, although her blood's enriched, in very truth, by the reflection of the Roman purple, still I say with madame to my noble-hearted king: "Such marriages sometimes do end in misery." And yet they are sometimes—from policy—contracted—

(He turns to the queen and hows low.) as her Majesty may know.

THE QUEEN.

Your Eminence has lied!—Forgive me, sire, he drives me to extremities. I was both

wrong and right, such is the fate of all. My God! Richelieu was much to be preferred to him! Your father caused me to be treated with respect. That man doth drive me mad! I am a woman, and I know naught of affairs of State,

(To Mazarin.)

as you are well aware.

(To the king.)

But I am queen, and I am cast aside; I am a mother, and he steals your heart from me, my son; O bitter woe!

(She pauses; her voice is choked by the tears which she forces back into her throat,)

You will not wed this nameless girl who makes soft eyes at Monsieur d'Épernon, will you, my child?

(She sits down, draws the king to her side, and throws her arms about him.)

Come hither.

(She points to the impassive Mazarin.)

His is a black heart. Yours is far too Search your memory. When you were but a child, how harsh he was! Do you remember? Shrewish, waxing angry at a word, and niggardly, he left you without bedclothes, with no fire in your room, in mid December. Fierce were the reproaches heaped on me therefor, on me. One day you were to go to Conflans, and he gave you such a tumble-down old carriage that the very people in the streets cried shame upon it. As he wished to reign, and render no account, he ordered, sire, that those things which would expand your intellect should not be taught you. 'T was his will that you should know no history. He burdened Paris with inglorious war, a civil conflict, impious and pitiless, which forced you, a poor, frightened child, to fly! Your people suffered. despoils them! aye, he starves them! Surely you cannot forget that wretched girl who

died of hunger on the bridge at Melun. Prince and duke he claimed to be, albeit he was neither one nor t'other. He basely took from you the money given you by Mousieur de Vieuville. At night you slept uneasily, because you felt him near you. Then his senseless vanity so far o'er-reached itself as to affect a retinue to rival yours. When he appeared, attended by the noise of jangling swords, do you remember? the audacious uproar roused you from your sleep, all trembling in the darkness,—you, the king, his king, head of your family! Said you: "He makes much clatter when he passes!"

(She kisses the king, who submits to her caresses with evident impatience, and keeps his eyes fixed upon the cardinal, as if looking to him for inspiration and counsel.)

Sire, you are king! you must reflect that here in France the people do not love a stranger's yoke. He 's an Italian.

THE KING.

And you are a Spaniard.

THE QUEEN (raising her head, and wiping away a tear).

I forgive you, child, that cruel word, which issues from your mouth but from his heart.

(With an indignant glance at Mazarin.)

He stands there, smiling like a jeering demou!

(She buries her face in her hands and weeps.)

Oh! . . .

(The cardinal, toying with the great watch he wears beneath his gown, causes it to strike as if by inadvertence.) THE KING (coldly).

Madame, 't is late.

THE QUEEN.

True, so it is. The room is ready. Let us retire. Come and we will minister to you. My women shall attend upon the king.

(Turning to the cardinal.)

This is my right.

(Drawing the king between her knees.)

My own dear little Louis, as we used to do, thou knowest! . . .

THE KING.

No, I will return to the château. Midnight is striking. Monsieur de Villequier will answer for my safety; and I kiss your Majesty's hand.

(To Mazarin.)

Come, monsieur.

THE QUEEN (gazing at the floor, without looking up at the king).

Alas!

(Mazarin approaches the table and takes a candlestick.

At the same time he leans over to the queen.)

THE CARDINAL (in an undertone to the queen).

We needs must have an explanation, undisturbed. I will return anon.

(The king kisses the queen's hand, bows low to her and takes his leave, preceded by the cardinal carrying the light.)

SCENE II

THE QUEEN, alone; afterward DAME CLAUDE.

THE QUEEN.

Rather than await thee, viper, may I die! The traitor! he would come and flout me to my face! Upon my word!

(She rings. Dame Claude, one of her women, appears at the door in the jog-piece at the right.)

Claude, is my bed made ready?

DAME CLAUDE (pointing to the room from which she came).

Yes, madame, in yonder room.

THE QUEEN (at the front of the stage, musing).

The king 's my son no more. The court is Mazarinist to the core. That man would place his foot upon my breast, in order that my son may laugh! My friends are all shut out.

(A pause while she is lost in thought.)

If Monsieur² were but two years older!

(She reflects more deeply than ever.)

Or-if . . .

(Raising her head.)

These are terrifying thoughts.

(She enters the adjoining room, preceded by Dame Claude, who has taken the other candlestick.)

(A moment of silence. The room is once more empty and dark. Suddenly in the jog-piece at the left, a panel of the wainscoting, in appearance like all the others, turns upon itself, and discloses an entrance which was masked by it. It seems to open upon a narrow stairway. A man in dark clothes ascends, wrapped in a cloak, with a dark lantern in his hand. It is Comte Jean. He enters, leaving the panel open behind him.)

SCENE III

COMTE JEAN; afterward THE MASK and ALIX.

COMTE JEAN.

At last!

(He looks about.)

Ten years! how many things have taken place! how many tears I 've shed in this ill-fated room! Still the same table and the same arm-chair! Ten years have passed! ten centuries! Poor woman! O, ye walls, save you none know my heart. Alone on earth do I endure the knowledge of the woe I 've suffered and the woe I 've wrought! But I have not the time to weep o'er my own fate. We must make haste.

(He turns toward the open panel, and leans over the dark staircase.)

This is the way. Come up.

(Enters the Mask wrapped in a cloak, and with a broad-brimmed hat pulled down over his eyes; Alix accompanies him.)

THE MASK (throwing hat and cloak upon the floor).

I love thee, Alix! I am free! Henceforth the world is ours!

(To Comte Jean.)

Oh! relieve me from this hideous mask!

COMTE JEAN.

At once.

(He motions to the Mask to sit down, then produces a file from the knapsack, and sets about filing off the padlock.)

THE MASK.

At last.—But—where are we?

COMTE JEAN.

Safe in the keeping of the dead, near God, and far from men. A saintly, kindly shade

keeps watch upon us here, and an old soldier is your guide.

(Pointing to Alix, who upon entering kneels in silence before a prie-Dieu in the corner of the stage.)

Yonder 's an angel on her knees. Fear naught.

THE MASK.

Accept my thanks.

COMTE JEAN.

To-morrow we will fly toward the frontier. In two days we shall be at Mezières. Our friends will take up arms for us. Meanwhile we quietly must pass the night in this deserted castle.

(As he is speaking, he completes the task of filing through the lock which at last yields, and the mask opens.)

There!

(He removes the mask and places it upon a small table in the corner of the room.)

(When the mask is removed, the prisoner stands for a moment as if dazed with happiness, and seems to experience an indescribable joy in breathing freely. He is a handsome youth of about sixteen.)

THE PRISONER.

O God!

ALIX (gazing at him).

How beautiful he is! More beautiful than in my dream!

THE PRISONER.

The shadow which enveloped me, the frightful shadow vanishes. Once more I hold my head erect, proudly exulting in the air and light and in my freedom! Everything is

lovely in my sight! I would that I could seize and hold each passing object. Alix! Alix! now I see with my whole face! Air! Air on every side! Now I can kiss thy hand and go where'er I will! Is this myself? Can it be true? How soft the night! Thy smile intoxicates me and all nature speaks with all its myriad voices to my ravished senses! Ah! I see! I hear! I breathe! I live! Alix! at last I come forth from the sunless cloud. Oh! look at me! I feel that I'm transfigured!

COMTE JEAN (who has not taken his eyes from the prisoner's face, and who seems lost in thought).

'Γ is a wonderful resemblance!

THE PRISONER (going to the window, and impetuously throwing it open).

Oh! the starry heaven! Yes, I was as one dead! The world 's unveiled to me! That mask was hell! Come hither to the window.

(He leads Alix to the window.)

How lovely are the trees! The whole world smiles and everything doth touch me to the heart! How soft the breeze! Oh! but 't is marvelous!

ALIX.

Poor love!

COMTE JEAN (pensively).

Now do I understand the mask.

THE PRISONER (excitedly).

My Alix, let us fly! yes, let us fly together to some blessed land, where we need never fear, where we shall have God's nature to ourselves! The stars will shine like this—in the blue sky; the woods will nod their heads, as now, and welcome us with joyful acclamations; we will drink our fill of the pure air, which cools the blood, and we will love each other . . .

(He falls upon his knees with his arms about Alix's waist.)

Thanks be to thee, O God Omnipotent!

COMTE JEAN (to the prisoner).

Time presses. We must needs take heed to our departure.

(To Alix.)

Come, madame, you know where be the keys; and let us go where Tagus waits for us below.

(To the prisoner.)

We will return for you.

(Exennt Comte Jean and Alix through the panel which closes behind them.)

(The prisoner, left alone, fixes his eyes ecstatically upon the sky.)

THE PRISONER.

O glorious sky! To-morrow I shall proudly walk beneath thy broad expanse. And I shall be like any other man, and I shall pass along the road like all who go their way at liberty, not thinking that sometimes a prisoner doth watch them as they pass! O bliss!

(Footsteps in the gallery at the back of the stage. He turns about in dismay.)

But I hear steps.

(He goes to the door at the back and looks out.)

No, nothing stirs.

(A light appears in the gallery. He fixes his eyes upon it in terror.)

Who is this pale-faced man in the red winding-sheet?—Ah! there are two.—The other is in black.—They come in this direction! Whither shall I fly?

(He runs to the door by which he entered and tries in vain to open it.)

This door? 'T is locked!

(He runs to the door at the right. That also resists his efforts.)

(Enters the Cardinal, accompanied by Chandenier, captain of his gendarynes. Chandenier,

The other, too!

(He goes behind the screen, which he folds back so that it conceals him.)

Just Heaven!

(Enters the Cardinal, accompanied by Chandenier, captain of his gendarmes. Chandenier carries in one hand a large portfolio, and in the other a candelabrum with branches. The Cardinal is leaning upon Chandenier's arm; he looks pale and ill, and coughs at intervals, putting his hand to his breast. He casts a glance about the salon and seems surprised to find no one there.)

SCENE IV

THE CARDINAL, CHANDENIER, THE PRISONER (in hiding).

THE CARDINAL.

No one here! Aha!

(To Chandenier.)

I hazard much in coming hither. Place a hundred of my guards about the castle.

THE PRISONER (peering out from behind the screen).

Who are these two demons? God in heaven! I am lost!

THE CARDINAL.

How now! her Majesty did not await my coming.

CHANDENIER.

Is she angry?

THE CARDINAL.

Why should we distress ourselves for that? My friend, in the old days it was a queenly wrath, but now 't is nothing but a woman's shrieks. Remain with thy lieutenant in the corridor, I can conveniently await till morning here the queen's awakening, and work meanwhile. 'T is most essential that I speak with her. 'T is well. Place everything upon the table.

(Chandenier places the candlestick and the portfolio on the table.)

By the way, to guard against all mishap, leave me thy dagger.

(Chandenier takes the dagger from his belt and obeys, then goes out at a sign from the Cardinal.) TILE CARDINAL (playing with the dagger, and trying its edge upon his finger).

Who can say? Prudence is the mother of security.

(He places the dagger upon the table.)

THE PRISONER (who has watched all the proceedings with dismay, closing the screen).

O God! preserve me!

(As soon as Chandenier has disappeared, the Cardinal takes a small key from his belt and opens the portfolio, the cover of which has a glass on the inner side and becomes a mirror as it is thrown back. The portfolio thus opened forms a desk. In one corner is a writing-case, in the other a jar of ronge with its accessories. A map protrudes from the portfolio. It is a map of Europe. The Cardinal nnrolls it, glances at it for a few seconds, then stands erect, coughing.)

THE CARDINAL (musing).

Health is the one thing that eludes my grasp. Power I have, wealth, honor, everything save life! I feel that I am dying.

(Playing with the dagger.)

Ah! how happy was I when I was a musketeer! when I was twenty-five!

(11e looks in the mirror.)

My face is ghastly.

(He applies rouge to his cheeks, then looks in the mirror for a moment and falls to musing again.)

How to bring about this marriage? It will surely fail! All these affronts will soon repel the king. Oh well! then we will take another. Charles the Second, pretender to the throne of England; or the Infant, whom John of

Portugal, the ruler of the sea, doth through the Holy Father offer me; or Conti.—We shall see.—'T would be a bitter pill to swallow! But no matter! I am master, and on me doth everything depend!

(Putting his hand to his chest.)

This pain!

(He coughs.)

I must to work! To do great deeds is to forget that one must die.

(He unrolls the map and examines it with profound attention.)

No more reverses! France, securing for herself tranquillity, has tranquillized the world.

(He leans over the map, then raises his head.)

The sword is insolent, the robe is jealous, but I have brought everything beneath my yoke. Bordeaux, Toulouse, Rennes,—Paris!—Paris! the mighty hydra! No more raging factions! no more combats!

(He unfolds a letter.)

Let us see what has the Emperor to offer.

(Glancing over the letter.)

Good. He seeks thus to extinguish every spark. He yields.

(Looking down upon the map.)

Pending the fall of Brussels and Besançon, we will take Brisach, Alsace and the Three Bishoprics. In due time I will carry out my plans, still unrevealed. From Rhine to Pyrenees must France extend. Paris, which may be reached in two or three days' march, is almost, so to speak, on the frontier. It should be in the centre. I will gain my object without noise and without war.

(He looks up at the portrait of Cardinal Richelieu.)

O Richelieu! We shall in turn have done a mighty work; he made the king, and I am building France.

(Turning his eyes upon the map.) But naught is done as yet.

(He rises.)

My edifice, more vast than any realm, more perfect than a king, the dream which hath so many nights bedazzled my poor eyes, the map whereon I all my toil have spent, the map which God, before he moulded us from clay, did draw with capes and seas and mountainchains and streams; which after Philip Second Richelieu bequeathed to me and which in thought I have completed; in a word, the work I have in hand to finish, and which now my will directs, is thou, O Europe, whom methinks I see hanging above my head, who dost thyself unfold before my startled gaze, a mammoth arch whereof France is the keystone!

(Returning to the map.)

Germany from hour to hour loses heart; Spain parts with her accretions; by the peace of Munster France becomes supreme. The lion has turned cat, the Emperor doth fawn on us. The North doth bend its knee but halfway to the ground before the Holy Empire, and turns its face to us. The Elector of Triers alone still hesitates to give in his adhesion to my plan. He is a priest and well along in years. How can I best attack him? Pardieu! through the house of Deux-Ponts, to which he belongs.

(Musing.)

Change the ambassador.—Or bribe some servant.—The Sultan is a boy of twelve, his empire is falling to decay. Each state has its own overhanging wall of rock; Denmark has Stockholm, Poland, Moscow. I have crushed the Swedes. I hold the Muscovite Grand Duke in leash, and limit his crusade to sending to the Doge an embassy. I keep a watchful eye upon Turin, a ring that oft doth break.—Farnese. Gonzague, and Este, houses that are dying out!—At Parma the old duke will die a sudden death; at Mantua a duenna, at

Modena a mere child; I am already master, without tumult or commotion. Through their doges the republics all are mine. I hold, for Brutus' virtue grows more human, Genoa through Paoli, Venice through Cornaro. Most discerning land !-the dagger, but the scaffold As for the petty states, we must, despite the diplomats, leave the Dalmatians for a toy Ragusa, Lubeck to the Germans. Thus doth everything proceed as I would have it, all goes well, and naught is doubtful. There are two dark spots, but two, in this fair, azure sky; Madrid which harbors plotters; London which resists my will; Cromwell the lucky madman; Philip the melancholy fool. —A fig for them!

(Looking at the map.)

But Rome! . . .

(Musing.)

O city bending 'neath the weight of years, which speaks but understands not, leans but falls not, so that his mind who looks upon it wavers 'twixt the Tower of Babel and the Tower of Pisa!

(Raising his head.)

Let us on the one hand state the question and on the other hand support our reasoning! Outside of Europe France has vast appendages. France everywhere is on the watch. Strong, fortunate, well-armed, she stamps out as she passes every spark of war. With Kurdistan the Persian would take Candahar from the Great Mogul, and from the Sultan Babylon; but we cried halt. Already,

from the Tigris to the Ganges, we are supplanting in the markets the Slavonian and Armenian traders. We are fast becoming masters everywhere: in India we have troops, in China Iesuits. Our engines of war are built in every place; a never-failing method of securing mastery without a struggle. I am old, crushed by the weight of years, my worst enemies; e'en now I see before me in the darkness, whereunto my steps are slowly tending, something yawning wide, that is much like an open grave. Ah, well! if the dread hour in very truth draws nigh, when God shall ask me lying in my shroud: "What hast thou done?" I can reply: "O God, the floods did beat upon my head; when I came on the stage, the tempest raged on every side; the strife was on betwixt the ideas of the old days and the new; a fearful strife, as thou dost know! The first onslaught was made by Louis the Eleventh; François First enlarged the breach, but perished at the work before the giant fell; the end of the great combat Richelien did not live to see; those men, who followed one and all their lofty destiny, made war. I have brought peace to the whole world!"

(Rising.)

Aye! peace to the whole world!—oh! dazzling spectacle! In this thrice sacred work each day I steadily press on. The King of France is my transcendent tool. Now I have done, I stand upon the summit! No more obstacles to overcome! no reefs to shun!

NOTES

THE TWINS (LES JUMEAUX), was originally called LE COMPE JEAN.

The manuscript has upon the first page of the first act the date: $fu/v \ge 0$, t839. The first act was finished August 8. The second act begun August 10, and finished August 15. The third act was begun August 17. On the last page is this note: Interrupted by illness August 23.

 $^{^{1}\}Lambda$ quotation from the Cinna of Corncille.

² Monsicur was the title given to the brother of a king of France; in this case the reference is to Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, younger brother of Louis XIV. and father of the famous Regent.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE TO THE TWINS

The identity of the famous Man in the Iron Mask has never been established, and must go down to posterity side by side with the authorship of the letters of Junins, as a problem destined never to be solved. Conjectures and theories are about as numerons in the one case as in the other. The various theories concerning the mysterious personage who is supposed to have been confined so many years under such mysterious circumstances, first at Ile Sainte-Marguerite, and afterward at the Bastile, have been several times published in juxtaposition; they may be found collected in an article usually published with the *Crimes Celèbres* of M. Alexandre Dumas, père, and in a more recent work by M. Topin. The theory adopted by Victor IIugo as the basis of the plot of *The Twins* has always had many adherents. The existence of a twin brother to Louis XIV. was deemed by Voltaire to furnish the solution of the riddle, and that solution was adopted by M. Dumas in the Vicomte de Bragelonne.

It is impossible to discover why the play was never finished.

M. Edmond Biré, in his "Victor Hugo après 1830," says:

"The following explanation was given by Victor Hugo, and reproduced by one of his secretaries, M. Richard Lesclide.

"The poet, contrary to his usual custom, spoke prematurely of his work. He read some scenes from it at a very small gathering of his most intimate friends, at which Louis Boulanger was present. On the same evening Louis Boulanger, still under the effect of the deep impression the reading made upon him, could not forbear to mention the Master's latest work before a small group of whom Alexandre Dumas père was one. The latter found the subject to his taste, and, without losing an hour, constructed a romance upon the lines of Hugo's drama; from *The Twins* he made the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*.

"Upon learning Louis Boulanger's indiscretion and its results, Victor Hugo flew into a towering rage, and threw the manuscript of *The Twins* into the fire. 'No,' says Madame Dronet, who was in the poet's study while he told the story to his secretary, 'no, you didn't throw your manuscript into the fire; you carried it away and stowed it in some corner, where it will be found one day or another.'"

The only mention of *The Twins* in the work entitled "Victor Hugo Raconté par un Temoin de sa Vie," is in these words:

"M. Victor Hugo, after The Burgraves, abandoned the stage, although he had had a drama almost finished since 1838" (1839).

"The 'Temoin' (witness) says M. Biré, whose very strong antipathy to his subject has been heretofore noticed in these notes, "was careful not to put forward the explanation we have just read. For at that time Alexandre Dumas was still living. They waited until his death before accusing him, not of a simple plagiarism made at his own risk, but of a downright abuse of confidence, a shameful act of treachery."

The author from whom we quote alleges the fact that the *Vicomte de Bragelonne* did not appear until 1847 (*Les Trois Mousquetaires* and *Vingt Aus Après* to which it forms the sequel, being of 1844 and 1845 respectively), as conclusive evidence of the falseness of the charge.

The Twins was published in 1889 among the (Eurres Inédites of Victor Hugo.









Moreau de Cours in

Manchon .

AMY ROBSART

ACT FOURTH SCENE V

ELLZABETH
Raise not your head so profully. Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Our father
Henry Eighth, of illustrious memory, cut off the heads that would not bend.

Ithmsdon, my good coesin, look to it that the gentleman pensioners of our suite are in readiness; let this man be placed in custody. Let him give up his sword, and let it be done with all speed! I have spoken; gulf rotally 8281 nf (Hunglon draws his sword; three gentlemen advance-lowed Leicester, who stands calm and (Hunglon draws his sword; three gentlemen advance-lowed leicester, who stands calm and unmoved. Any throw-herself at the queen's feet.)

""" unmoved. Any throw-herself at the queen's feet.)

No! no madame! Mercy! justice! Helfs not guilty! he is not guilty! No one can accuse the noble Earl of Leicester in aughtif see it ogulf robid, siold was seeking in every the relation at 1,1 M. Souniet proposed the total Walter Scott's novels, A to write the first three acts. M. Scar "M. Victor Hugo did h only half satisfied; he old not a sting of the wanted to cut our all that was not grave at. . as a precedent; but at that time I : 2 3 - -Paris, and M. Soumet claimed that, can be plays to the not stand the test of representing that it is a remarkable of sublime efforts, beautiful money as less (in the distribution) choice, to arouse laughter a weeping and conclored in a on the lest of terms; on or there a kindle rough

AMY ROBSART

ACT FOURTH SCENE V

ELIZABETH.

Raise not your head so proudly, Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Our father Henry Eighth, of illustrious memory, cut off the heads that would not bend. Hunsdon, my good cousin, look to it that the gentleman pensioners of our suite are in readiness; let this man be placed in custody. Let him give up his sword, and let it be done with all speed! I have spoken.

(Hunsdon draws his sword; three gentlemen advance toward Leicester, who stands calm and unmoved. Amy throws herself at the queen's feet.)

AMV

No! no, madame! Mercy! justice! He is not guilty! he is not guilty! No one can accuse the noble Earl of Leicester in aught!

PREFACE

BY THE EDITORS

In 1828 Victor Hugo had just completed *Cromwell*, and was about to write *Marion de Lorme*. *Cromwell* was not his first drama; several years earlier he had written one, under circumstances which are thus related by the author of *Victor Hugo Raconté far un temoin de sa Vie*.

"* * * At the age of nineteen, when, his mother being dead and his father at Blois, Victor Hugo, alone in the world and prevented by his lack of means from marrying, was seeking in every direction the money which would bring happiness within his reach. M. Soumet proposed to him that they should together write a play based upon one of Walter Scott's novels, Kenilworth. M. Soumet was to arrange the plot, M. Victor Hugo to write the first three acts, and M. Soumet the last two.

"M. Victor Hugo did his part; but, when M. Soumet read his three acts, he was only half satisfied; he did not approve the combination of tragedy and comedy, and he wanted to cut out all that was not grave and serious. M. Victor Hugo cited Shakespeare as a precedent; but at that time English actors had not made Shakespeare popular in Paris, and M. Soumet claimed that, although his plays were good reading, they would not stand the test of representation; that *Hamlet* and *Othello*, moreover, were rather subline efforts, beautiful monstrosities, than chefs-d'œuvre; that a play must make its choice, to arouse laughter or weeping. The collaborators, being unable to agree, parted on the best of terms; each of them took with him the acts he had written and his

independence, and completed his play as he chose. M. Soumet produced *Emilia*, which, when played at the Théâtre-Français by Mile. Mars, had a sort of half-success. M. Victor Hugo completed his *Amy Robsart* according to his own ideas, freely mingling comedy and tragedy therein."

Six years had passed, and M. Hugo had entirely forgotten his first play, when the younger of his two brothers-in-law, Paul Foucher, who had a strong inclination for the stage, begged him to let him read it. Alexandre Soumet had mentioned it to him the day before as a singularly interesting piece of work.

"It startled me a little at the time," said Soumet, "and there are many audacious passages in it which I myself would not venture to father even now; but, as English dramas have succeeded, I don't see why that should not succeed. If I were Victor Hugo I would not throw away a play in which there are some very fine scenes."

Paul Foucher, after reading the drama, insisted that Victor Hugo should follow Soumet's advice. But Hugo, who had already become famous, did not care to put his name to a play whose subject was borrowed from somebody else.

"Very well," said Paul Foucher, "if you don't wish to have it produced under your name, let it be produced under mine. You will do me a great service, for such a play will bring my name forward, and throw the stage-doors wide open to me."

Victor Hugo consented, glad to oblige his brother-in-law, and no less glad perhaps to make this trial of the theatre and the public.

But the play was not produced as the author wrote it at the age of nineteen. Victor Hugo did to Amy Robsart what he had done to Bug-Jargal, and what he would have done to Cromwell, had not Talma's death prevented its production. He modified and compressed the drama, and did not allow it to be played until he had prepared it for the stage.

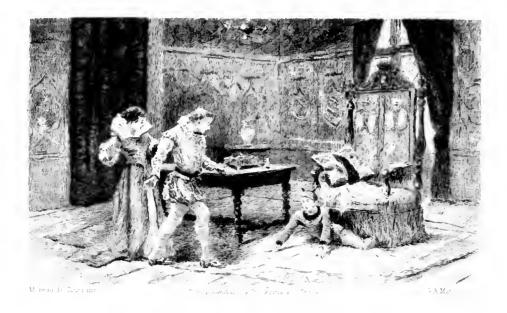
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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUDLEY, EARL OF LEICESTER
RICHARD VARNEY
SIR HUGH ROBSART
FLIBBERTIGIBBET
ALASCO
LORD SUSSEX
LORD SHREWSBURY
FOSTER

ELIZABETH, Queen of England AMY ROBSART JEANNETTE

LORDS, LADIES, GUARDS, PAGES



ACT FIRST

A large Gothic apartment. At the rear, a glass door. At the right, an open window. On the same side, an arm-chair for two persons, surrounded by an earl's and countess's coronets; the feet of the chair are hidden by velvet valances. A table with twisted legs.

SCENE I

EARL OF LEICESTER, VARNEY.

(They enter together, talking. Leicester places a small iron casket on the table.)

LEICESTER.

Thou 'rt right, Varney, though thy advice tallies not, mayhap, with that my conscience offers. To make known to the queen my secret marriage to Amy Robsart is impossible to-day. Elizabeth doth confer upon me the rare and signal honor of a visit here in my castle of Kenilworth. A few hours hence she will be here, and in her train my rival, rather my enemy, the Earl of Sussex, 'twixt whom and myself it is her purpose to effect a reconciliation.

VARNEY.

In sooth, the virgin-queen, as she is called, doth not with good grace allow that they who aspire to her favor should be more enslaved than she herself is by the laws of love. To confess that neither your heart nor your hand is free would be to give the Earl of Sussex such a great advantage!

LEICESTER (interrupting him, impatiently).

I tell thee, Richard, that I will do what thou wouldst have me do, for 't is forced upon me by my embarrassing situation. But none the less my heart is filled with anxiety and sorrow. What is the favor of a queen compared with domestic happiness? what is disgrace inflicted by Elizabeth beside my Amy's love?

VARNEY.

To hear the Earl of Leicester draw that parallel should be enough to fill my lady's heart with gratitude.

LEICESTER.

Beloved Amy!

VARNEY.

To hear the Earl of Leicester heave that love-lorn sigh should be enough to make the heart of Sussex swell with hope.

LEICESTER.

Sussex! Sussex! I tell thee I have decided to be silent! But if the queen should discover without my help that which thou dost prevent me from disclosing to her myself?

VARNEY.

Have no fear, my lord. This ruined portion of the castle escapes all prying eyes; 't is far removed from the new castle, and is supposed

to be uninhabited and uninhabitable. And, in good sooth, did it not shelter your lordship's mysterious dove, one might say—even though you should leave your crabbed old retainer Foster here—that 't was inhabited by none but owls.

LEICESTER.

'T is well; now leave me, Varney. Go and overlook the last preparations for the queen's reception. I must, myself, hold speech with our astrologer.

VARNEY (feigning surprise).

Ah! has my lord caused Alasco to be summoned hither?

LEICESTER.

Aye, yesterday. Didst thou not know it? He 's in the secret chamber above our heads. Send him some refreshment, Varney, while I question him touching a certain person's horoscope.

VARNEY.

Enough, my lord.

(He bows and exit.)

SCENE II

LEICESTER (alone).

(He slowly approaches one of the windows.)

Not a cloud in the sky. Ah! if 't is true that our destinies are subject to the action of the stars that twinkle above our heads, the revelation of their influence was never more necessary to me than at this moment; my path on earth is uncertain and hidden!

(He sits down by the table, opens the iron casket, and takes from it a piece of paper covered with cabalistic signs.)

I can not take my eyes from the mysterious signs drawn by Alasco's hands. But ought I to put faith in their brilliant predictions? What would England say did she but know that at this hour the noble Earl of Leicester, Elizabeth's all-powerful favorite, is seeking,

like a child, to read his destiny in the symbolical inventions of an astrologer? Ah! but is not my weakness shared by all who have cherished in their hearts the loftiest ambition? Mere commonplace destinies have no horoscope; but Cæsar more than once consulted the prophetesses of Gaul before he passed the Rubicon!

(He approaches the wall at the back of the stage, opens a low, masked door, and, after looking uneasily about, calls in a hollow voice:)

Alasco! Demetrius Alasco!

(A little old man comes down a dark, narrow staircase, and appears upon the stage. He is dressed in a full gray frock. He has a bald head, white beard and black eyebrows.)

SCENE III

LEICESTER, ALASCO.

ALASCO.

My lord, I am at your service.

LEICESTER (pointing to the parchment).

Old man, know'st thou that thou hast here set down most audacious dreams? That night the heavens were cloudless, and thou couldst read them like an open book. The stars—am I not right?—have not confirmed those rash predictions.

ALASCO.

Not so, my son; I have seen again in your star what it had already disclosed to me. Earl of Leicester, thy ambition is great, but thy fortune will be greater still.

LEICESTER.

Thou didst then, in very truth, see in the darkness of my destiny . . .

ALASCO.

Must I repeat it? A throne. And what throne? The first on earth!

LEICESTER.

Old man, dost thou weigh well thy words?

ALASCO.

You'd have the truth, my lord. I know that 't is not always prudent to tell the truth to those who rule the world.

(At that moment Leicester meets the false, piercing eye of Alasco fixed upon his face. The earl hastily puts his hand to his sword.)

LEICESTER.

Villain! thou dost deceive me! By the faith of my ancestors thou 'rt making sport of me. Dearly shalt thou pay me for thy insolent raillery.

ALASCO.

Nay, he rails not, who has his eyes upon the heavens and his foot upon the tomb! Hark ye, my son: To-day the April moon is in the great Chaldean arc. I have been forewarned that on this day your unworthy servitor would be in danger of his life, but that he would come forth therefrom safe and well. I am old, weak and defenseless, and you are young and strong and armed, but I shall have more faith than you in the twofold prediction; your star lied not, and you will not kill me.

LEICESTER.

A proof! a proof! Give me the proof that I am not the dupe of an impostor!

ALASCO.

The proof? 'T is this: that while I foretell for you this royal future, I am none the less aware what obstacles the past puts in your way.

LEICESTER.

How now! what obstacles? What meanest thou? Who told thee?

ALASCO.

My son, remember that yesterday you caused me to be seized in my secure retreat,

like a wild beast; that a closed carriage, so tightly closed that none could look within, brought me to this dungeon, isolated from all human habitations; that no human voice has struck upon my ear for four and twenty hours; and that, fasting and sleepless, as the cabalistic law prescribes, last night with my unsmiling eyes I studied for you, from this narrow turret, the book that has no pages. Reflect, and say if any human means could have informed me that this ruin is not deserted, as it is supposed to be, but that it has an occupant whom it conceals from all the world.

LEICESTER.

My God! stay! hold thy peace! He is right. How can he have found out?

ALASCO.

(He takes a parchment from his bosom, and pretends to study it closely.)

The irregularity of the stellar zones indicates that the young woman's birth, though honorable, is below the rank of the noble earl. Nathless the crossing of the lines denotes a lawful marriage, which is kept secret, as the proximity of the nebulous Chormith proves. But this marriage must inevitably be dissolved; for the young lady's pale star will disappear in the beams of the great Southern comet, which draws into its vortex the noble earl's bright star, and represents . . .

LEICESTER.

And represents . . .? Finish, knave, finish!

ALASCO.

Your lordship will have it so?

LEICESTER.

And quickly, I command thee!

ALASCO.

I am but a feeble old man, and what my mouth says was not conceived in my mind.

LEICESTER.

Speak then! wilt thou speak?

ALASCO.

The great crowned comet represents an exalted, sovereign lady, who is to come from the south . . .

LEICESTER.

What says it? Old man, what meaning dost thou conceal 'neath these mysterious words? Tell me, I command thee, who this sovereign lady is?

ALASCO.

The Earl of Leicester is not unversed in heraldry, and he will recognize her by her crown.

LEICESTER.

Ye powers of heaven!

ALASCO.

The sovereign brings hither in her heart a tenderness as yet but ill-defined, which may become more clear and stronger. And perchance,—What is love beside ambition? A man doth not refuse the hand that gives a sceptre. The lord of this castle is not wont to pause in the career of grandeur . . .

LEICESTER (bewildered).

Enough, old man, enough! You speak to me of the future, and your voice causes my heart to ache as if it were the voice of my remorse!

ALASCO.

If your lordship . . .

LEICESTER.

Enough, I tell thee!

(After a pause.)

Alasco, if thou dost set store by thy life, bear always in mind that, when one has the fortune to know everything, 't is most essential also to know how to hold one's peace. I

will reward thee generously for thy words, but for thy silence more generously still.

(He tosses him a purse of gold.)

(Enters Varney, followed by a servant with a basket in which refreshments can be seen. The servant places the basket on a table, and exit.)

SCENE IV

LEICESTER, ALASCO, VARNEY.

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VARNEY.

My lord, your orders have been carried out. Kenilworth Castle is ready to receive her Majesty the Queen.

LEICESTER.

'T is well. I go now to make my own preparations. I will return hither, ere long,

to fulfill a desire which the lady within hath graciously expressed. Do you, Varney, have an eye to Alasco's comfort. Show him all the consideration due to his years and his learning.

(Varney bows. Exit Leicester.)

SCENE V

ALASCO, VARNEY.

VARNEY (looking at Alasco, with a laugh).

Well, thou old child of hell, so my master and thine has become thy dupe? The royal lion of England is caught in thy toils, eh, fox?

ALASCO.

You might, my son, express yourself with greater dignity. If my learning . . .

VARNEY.

Thy learning! Come, throw away the mask with me, who know thy face! Darest thou say to me that thou hast in very truth read in the stars the surprising revelations that thou didst but now make known to the earl?

ALASCO.

At least, mysterious means . . .

VARNEY.

Yes, yes, a strip of parchment that a sly and active emissary of my own slipped into thy hand last night on thy arrival.

ALASCO.

Aha! the youth who whispered to me in the darkness came from thee? Who was he, prithee? His voice was not unknown to me.

VARNEY.

A page the devil sent to take service with me. However, you knew enough to profit by the information he gave you.

ALASCO.

Why not? since it saved me precious time, much more profitably employed in the contemplation of nature's secrets, in the conquest of universal knowledge. One step more, and I shall have penetrated to the inmost recesses of the laboratory of creation, and shall hold in my hands the seeds of gold! and then, take heed, 't will be my turn to be thy master, thou insolent favorite's favorite!

VARNEY.

Hoity-toity! Master Alasco, let us not lose our heads! I have such faith in your science that, should I forfeit your good-will, I should eat nothing but fresh eggs for three months.

ALASCO.

Presumptuous man! my philters! my potions! dost think that I would waste them upon thee? Dost think that I would throw away, to save thy miserable life, the sublime quintessences of the rarest plants, the purest minerals, wherein so many priceless elements are concentrated that the whole domain of a Leicester would not pay for one phial? Have no fear, Varney! although 't is certain that more venom can be extracted from thy body than from any viper's, thou art not worth a drop of one of my poisons.

VARNEY.

That 's the most comforting word that thou hast thus far said to me.

ALASCO.

And as for penetrating, without thee, thy master's secrets, had I but chosen to exert myself, the task would have been no more difficult than in the case of thy own secrets, Richard Varney!

VARNEY.

My secrets? "T is, indeed, no difficult matter to know them: I have none.

ALASCO.

Is 't so? And Leicester's clandestine marriage which thou dost so earnestly desire to annul,—is it in his interest, sayest thou? Is it in order that he may not pause in his glorious career?

VARNEY.

Aye, and a little, mayhap, to exchange the livery of a nobleman's squire for the cloak of a king's equerry.

ALASCO.

Is it for that alone, subtle Varney? It was beneath thy roof that the illustrious Earl of Leicester was first presented to fair Amy Robsart; behind thee he took shelter, when, seeking to seduce her but seduced by her instead, he made fair Amy his wife. In the eyes of old Sir Hugh Robsart the man who carried off his daughter was not Leicester, but Dudley.

VARNEY.

These secrets, O sagacious Alasco, thou didst learn from my own mouth.

ALASCO.

True, but there are others I have read in thine eyes. Thou hast taken the comedy seriously, my master; thou lovest Amy Robsart.

VARNEY (with a forced laugh).

1 love her! Nonsense!

AtASCO (persisting).

Thou lovest Amy Robsart! and, if thou 'rt bent upon separating her from the earl, 't is in the hope that some day she will cleave to the squire.

VARNEY.

Peace! Who can have told you that? 'T is not the countess; she is far too proud!

ALASCO.

Thy confusion proves to me that I am not at fault. Suppose the earl should learn how his squire doth abuse his confidence?

VARNEY.

Suppose the 'earl should learn how his astrologer doth play upon his credulity? Go to! go to! be guided by me, Alasco, and let us remain good friends! For both of us it is the safest way.

(Drawing nearer to him.)

Listen. Your laboratory at Pelham blazed forth one morning like unto one of hell's craters. You know that on the estate of Cumnor we have one tenfold more valuable, where you will find furnaces and starry globes left by the former prior, and where you can melt, amalgamate, compound, blow, calcine, vaporize and volatilize at your sweet will, till the green dragon changes to a golden goose . . .

ALASCO.

Good! and what commands must I obey to gain possession of so fine a workshop?

VARNEY.

Do what I say, and hold thy peace concerning what I do.

ALASCO.

So be it. But, first of all, I prithee tell me, am I to be kept long a prisoner in this deserted turret? I like not to remain thus all alone at night, with the screech-owls and eagles.

VARNEY.

What do I hear? The sorcerer doth tremble like a child in solitude and darkness? Thou dost not now make gold, Alasco, and thou hast no fear of robbers. As for the demons, they ought at least to leave thee at peace in this world.

ALASCO.

This world is not the only world; there is the other! and last night I saw . . .

VARNEY.

Saw what, in God's name? Thy patron, Satan, with his horns twelve cubits long, and his tail, that makes as many turns upon itself as doth the spiral staircase in the old bell-tower of St. Paul's at London?

ALASCO.

Joke not, Varney, and speak lower. Yes, last night, at midnight, I saw a spectre.

VARNEY.

Dost thou take me for Leicester, Alasco?

ALASCO.

Speak low, I tell thee! Varney, I had, of late, a pupil, a disciple . . .

VARNEY.

Aye, a confederate.

ALASCO.

Pray hold thy peace! He was a strange being, capricious and mischievous; as clever as a demon and agile as a sylph; more like a child than like a man, and much more like an imp than either. His name was Flibbertigibbet.

VARNEY.

An impish name, in truth.

ALASCO.

He had an inquisitive eye and a keen mind; he mastered certain of my secrets . . .

VARNEY.

Rash youth!

ALASCO.

I was compelled to part with him. I left Pelham, leaving my laboratory, my alembics and my furnace at his disposal. But I did not forget to leave a keg of powder hidden in a secret compartment of the furnace!

VARNEY.

Ingenious negligence!

ALASCO.

I learned two days later of the explosion of the laboratory. My poor pupil surely met his death therein.

VARNEY.

At all events thy poor pupil carried thy secrets with him to the grave.

ALASCO.

Aye, but he brings them back again! Varney, 't was he, his phantom, that appeared to me last night beneath the arched roof of this turret!

VARNEY.

Can it be so? What said he to thee?

ALASCO.

Fearful things; things that hell, death and he alone could know. He reproached me, with a bitter laugh, for what he called his murder. I was half senseless with fright.

VARNEY.

And in what shape did Flibbertigibbet's shade appear to thee?

ALASCO.

In the shape of a young flame-colored devil, with something at the end of his black horns that gave forth a phosphorescent gleam in the moonlight.

VARNEY (aside).

It must have been my shatter-brained little clown!

ALASCO.

What say you, Richard, to this strange vision?

VARNEY.

But was it not rather dream than vision?

ALASCO (shaking his head).

Nay, Varney, nay! the infernal powers take a hand in our affairs. Let us beware!

VARNEY.

One reason more, my friend, why we should work in unison! Alasco, 't is not within my power to set thee free at once; but I may indirectly advise Leicester so to do. Give me thine aid, and I will give thee mine. The

earl will soon return and must not find us together. Faithfully observe our compact, and I will do the same. Is 't agreed?

ALASCO.

Agreed.

(They shake hands.)

VARNEY.

With this, farewell, my dear Alasco!
(Aside.)

The devil take thee, vile poisoner!

ALASCO.

Farewell, dear Varney, till we meet again!
(Aside.)

The lightning strike thee down, infernal villain!

(Exit Varney.)

SCENE VI

ALASCO, alone; afterward FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

ALASCO.

The fellow hath no conscience; he believes in naught but hell!

(Suddenly a piercing voice calls him from without.)

THE VOICE.

Doboobius!

ALASCO (starting back).

My God, who calls me by that name?

THE VOICE.

Dr. Doboobius!

ALASCO.

O Heaven! 't is the name under which I was proscribed! And again 't is Flibbertigibbet's voice!

THE VOICE.

'T is Flibbertigibbet himself.

ALASCO (hiding his face in his hands).

How now! in broad daylight! Oh! mercy!

THE VOICE.

Mercy? On one condition.

ALASCO.

Name it! speak! what wouldst thou have? (Flibbertigibbet leaps through the open window and appears; flame-colored devil's costume.)

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (pointing to the basket of provisions).

What would I have?—I 'd have a bit of yonder bread and a cup of yonder wine.

ALASCO (raising his head in amazement).

What language for a shade!

(He watches Flibbertigibbet, who has opened the basket, and taken therefrom a bottle and a piece of bread, which he attacks with great avidity.)

Why then thou art not dead?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (eating).

In sooth am I, of hunger and thirst.

ALASCO (touching him).

Why, poor Flibbertigibbet is really alive.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

'T is not thy fault, eh, my kind master? And I would have liked nothing better than to take my turn and frighten thee to death. But 't is well nigh eighteen hours since the spectre ate, and his young appetite could wait no longer. Everybody must live, even ghosts.

ALASCO (aside).

Living !—I am not sure that I did not prefer him as a ghost!

. (Aloud.)

So thou didst escape the explosion? By what miracle?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

'T was by no miracle at all, but by my wit. I knew enough to discover your mine, dear master, and when it blew up I took good care to be out of doors.

ALASCO.

I swear to you, my child . . .

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Oh! drop your oaths; I know you. What 's more, I know your secrets; and therefore you fear me-and I do not fear you.

ALASCO (aside).

Accursed little scoundrel!

(Aloud.)

Dear Flibbertigibbet, let us leave the past I do assure thee that I rejoice sincerely to find thee still alive. But answer my questions. How cam'st thou here?

FLIBBERTIGIBRET.

I am here ostensibly to assist your accomplice Varney's villainous designs upon the mysterious lady who lives in concealment here. Varney! another man whose schemes I am beginning to fathom.

ALASCO.

But tell me, why this extraordinary disguise?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

The sorcerer's trade was too dangerous. I became an actor. I belong to the troop that is to take part in the entertainment given by the Earl of Leicester to the queen. I play the devils and the imps in the masquerades of Shakespeare and Marlowe, and I wear the costume of my part to distinguish myself from the noblemen.

ALASCO (aside).

Monkey!

(Aloud.)

And art thou content with thy new profession?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Hum-! none too well! I'm deadly sick of forever repeating the same phrases and making the same wry faces. I am naturally 't were placed there for the purpose.

inquisitive, and I love to be free. I would like to play a real part and be concerned in a real intrigue. I scent one hereabout, which seems to me mysterious enough, and most interesting; and for that reason I did not reject your Varney's offers, although I promised myself to take no further part therein than suited my fancy.

ALASCO.

Wilt thou then return to me?

FLIBBERTIGEBBET.

Why not? But with the same reservations and precautions, I warn you.

ALASCO.

As you choose. I should be glad to know more than Varney is pleased to tell me touching the mysterious lady, as you name her, and touching my lord Leicester.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Oh, yes! to help you in your horoscopes. I understand.

ALASCO.

The earl and the lady will be here anon. If then couldst . . .

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Hear what they say, and repeat it to you? Magnificent! For my part I shall be charmed to listen to the dialogue between the falcon and the dove.

ALASCO (looking about).

We must find some nock to conceal thee in.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Aha! a lordly settle that looks as if

ALASCO.

Well, hasten, I hear some one coming.
(He assists Flibbertigibbet to crawl under the great arm-chair.)

(Aside.)

If they could but surprise him there and hang him to the castle eaves! Ah! what a happy riddance!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (under the chair).

Some one comes. Away with you, Dr. Doboobius.

ALASCO.

Call me not by that name.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Oho! the serpent has taken on a new skin.
(Alasco goes back into the turret.)

SCENE VII

LEICESTER (wrapped in a cloak), AMY, FLIBBERTIGIBBET (hiding).

(The countess enters, leaning on the earl's arm.)

AMY.

How kind you are, my dear lord, to have kept your promise, to have yielded to my whim, and come hither, before presenting yourself to the queen, to show yourself to your poor hermit in your princely costume! Allow me to remove your cloak with my own hands.

LEICESTER (smiling).

So you are like all other women, Amy? Silk, diamonds and feathers are more to them than the man whom they adorn.

(He makes a feeble show of resistance as the countess removes his cloak and exposes him to view, dressed in court costume and wearing all his orders. He is dressed all in white, with white silk stockings, white satin doublet, white leather belt embroidered with silver, white velvet mantle, embroidered with silver and decorated with the insignia of the Garter.)

AMY.

Amy has proved to you, methinks, dear earl, that she cannot more dearly love the great personage whom this brilliant costume adorns, than the stranger who came to her in the woods of Devon, clad in a plain brown cloak, announcing his approach by a blast upon his hunting horn.

LEICESTER.

Dear love, thon sayest truly.

AMY.

Now, my lord, sit you there, as one before whom all others should bend the knee.

(She leads the earl to the great chair of state. He takes his seat thereon.)

LEICESTER.

And do thou come and take thy place beside me.

AMY (seating herself upon a cushion in front of him).

I am here.

LEICESTER.

Thy place is by my side.

AMY.

Nay, at thy feet. Leave me here, my dear lord; 't is better so, and I am happy here.

(Gazing at him.)

How handsome, how magnificent you are in this guise, my lord! What is this embroidered strap about your knee?

LEICESTER (smiling).

That embroidered strap, as thou dost call it, is the Garter, which the king himself is proud to wear. See, this is the star belonging to it, and this the *George*, the jewel of the Order. Thou hast heard the tale of how King Edward and Lady Salisbury . . .

AMY (smiling and lowering her eyes).

Yes, I know. I know that King Edward made of a lady's garter the first decoration of an English knight.

LEICESTER.

I had the honor to receive this order with the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Northampton and the Duke of Rutland. My rank was less exalted than that of those three noble lords, but must not he who would rise begin at the lowest rung of the ladder?

AMY.

And what is this lovely collar, of such superb workmanship, with the jewel like a sheep hanging in the air?

LEICESTER.

'T is the insignia of a venerable order, which formerly pertained to the house of Burgundy, the Order of the Golden Fleece. Most valuable prerogatives are attached to it; the King of Spain himself, the heir of the Burgundian family, may not sit in judgment upon a knight of the Order, without the presence and assent of the Grand Chapter.

AMY.

And to what country does this other brilliant collar belong?

LEICESTER.

'T is the Order of Saint Andrew, re-established by James, the last king of Scotland. It was conferred on me at the time 't was thought the young dowager of France and Scotland, ill-fated Mary Stuart, would not decline to marry an English baron. But is it not far better to be a free English nobleman than to share with a woman that unhappy mountain kingdom of the North?

AMY.

I think as does my noble Leicester. For my own part, I would always have preferred the hand of Dudley to that of any monarch in the world. LEICESTER (aside).

Alas!

AMV.

What troubles thee, my lord? Think'st thou that a queen's love would be more ardent and more tender than thy Amy's?

LEICESTER (kissing her on the brow).

No, oh no! and nothing, nothing shall tear thee from my arms, my wife! my best beloved wife!

AMY.

Aye, thy wife. The child of an obscure country gentleman is held in lawful embrace upon that glorious breast, laden with the insignia of all the renowned chivalric orders of Europe. But when shall I be thy wife in the sight of all the world as I am in God's sight and thine?

LEICESTER.

As soon as it can possibly be, dear child.

(He rises.)

But now I have gratified thy wish, and despite the happiness it affords me to be with thee, I must say farewell.

AMY.

One moment, my dear lord, one moment more! When I ask thee to own me as thy wife before the world, thou dost not, I trust, accuse me in thy heart of empty pride and vainglory. And yet how could I not be proud to be acknowledged as the lawful spouse of the most illustrious of English noblemen? But I think more than all else, Dudley, of my unhappy father. What is he saying at this moment? What is he doing? What misery for him the day he rose without receiving at his waking his child's accustomed kiss! Poor father! Did he think, could he have thought that it was Varney, your squire, who seduced me and abducted me? Ah! that thought is unendurable to me! He knows thee not, my

Leicester, and if, in his thoughts, he could never look down to Varney's level to seek his daughter's husband, he could no more look up to thine. My best-beloved, release me from my oath, allow me at least to hasten to him, to undeceive him, to restore to the old man his cherished daughter, and to restore her to him as the spouse of the renowned Earl of Leicester.

LEICESTER.

Some day, yes, some day, Amy, this wish also shall be gratified. Believe me, thou canst not long more ardently than I for that day. What happiness, when I can comfort thy father's declining years, and, casting aside all the weariness and anxiety of ambition, pass all my days at thy feet, at the feet of the most adorable and most adored of women! But alas! we must still wait and be content with hoping.

AMY.

But why? what obstacle prevents this union which you say that you desire, and which divine and human laws alike enjoin upon us? Ah! if you did desire it, even a little, no one would dare oppose it; for never would a greater power have aided a more righteous cause.

LEICESTER.

'T is easy for you to speak thus, Amy! you do not know the court, the requirements of rank, the duties of high office! and you make this request upon the very day when I proposed to urge you to keep more carefully concealed than ever. Know you not that to-day, within the hour, I receive the queen here in this castle?

AMY.

The queen? Even so; what better opportunity to announce your marriage to her?

LEICESTER.

What do you say, unhappy child? Know you naught of the capriciousness and evanescence of the royal favor? That announcement would destroy us both. Trust to me, beloved Amy. Happier days will come, and if they come not, I shall know how to hasten them. Meanwhile, disturb not our farewell by a request which thine own interest forbids me to grant.

(He rises to embrace Amy and pushes back the chair, which rolls suddenly away and leaves Flibbertigablet in full view.)

LEICESTER (spying Flibbertigibbet).

What 's this?

(He extricates himself from the astonished Amy's arms, and rushes upon the imp.)

What doth this villain here?

FLIBBERTtGIBBET (boldfy raising his head).

My gracious lord, I have been, as you see, assisting, like the jealous Odragonal, at the interview between handsome Meriandre and lovely Indamira. I have been listening.

LEICESTER.

So? in that case thou hast listened at the expense of thine ears!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

'T is likely.

LEICESTER.

What art thou?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

What you choose. A dead man or a living. Dead, if such be your dagger's good pleasure; if not, a living man, and one who prefers the end of a good meal to the beginning of a quarrel.

LEICESTER.

Insolent clown! Thou 'rt playing with the rope of thy gallows.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

For lack of means to cut it.

LEICESTER (intensely excited).

'T is some emissary of Lord Sussex and my enemies. Go; thy audacity shall be so punished as to make all thy fellows tremble.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

They are few. My lord earl, you can do with me either of three things at your choice: hang me, as a thief, to the highest tree in the forest; nail me to the great gate of the castle as a spy; or, as a sorcerer send me to hell at the stake.

LEICESTER.

Such effrontery is seldom seen! But I must know who placed him there. Hark ye, villain: thou hast deserved all of those punishments and more beside. But thou mayest escape them and obtain mercy by telling me whose vile tool thou art.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

To save my life? that would be cowardice!

LEICESTER.

I can do more for thee than give thee life. Doubtless thou 'rt paid to ply this trade of spy: tell me how much, and if thou dost add thereto the name of thy employer, I will give thee the sum that thou art promised a hundred times over. Reveal this base intrigue to me.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

To make my fortune? that would be despicable.

LEICESTER.

What! threats and promises have no effect on thee. Mayhap force will exert more influence. Who concealed thee here? tell me! if not . . .

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

I care as little whether I tell you it, or hold my tongue, as for the seven burners of the wonderful lamp; and, if you had assumed a different tone with me, I should, in all likelihood, have answered you, for he who put me in this wretched plight is a vile schemer whom I should have been overjoyed to punish. But, O high and mighty lord, as my only way of maintaining an advantage over you is to hold my tongue, I do not see why I should abandon it.

LEICESTER.

Ah! this is too much!

(He draws his dagger.)

Traitor, thou shalt die!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Good! in that case the secret dies with me.

AMY (clinging to the earl's arm in terror).

My lord! my Dudley! what would you do? End our sweet lovers' converse with a murder!

LEICESTER (with raised dagger).

Aye, so that it may not end with a more ominous catastrophe.

AMV.

Oh! mercy for the poor wretch, my lord!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (aside).

She is adorable!

LEICESTER.

Nay, Amy, deter me not! the villain is a spy!

AMY.

Not so, my lord! Observe his absurd costume. 'T is some clown, or at the worst a madman.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Even so, defend me, noble lady! There 's kinship between you and me; I am as mad as the moon, and you as beautiful as the sun.

AMY (smiling).

You see that he is mad! Fie, fie, my lord! would you strike down this poor, defenseless wretch, under your Amy's eyes? I claim from your chivalry the lady's privilege. Grant me this poor life. Go to! go to!

(She takes the dagger from the earl's hands, while he looks at her with a smile and makes only a feeble resistance.)

Give me that naughty dagger, my lord, and let it no longer occupy a place close to a heart that is all mine.

(She throws the dagger through the open window.)

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (aside).

A naughty dagger! Zounds! a real Toledo blade, inlaid with gold.

LEICESTER.

Amy, you are a child! by sparing his life it may be that you imperil yours and my own.

AMY (eagerly).

Believe it not! an act of elemency could not bring evil fortune. And more, how can the eagle's fate depend upon . . .

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

The bat. Allow me to select the animal myself.

AMY.

Come, good my lord, pray let it not be said that you refused me everything to-day.

(Leicester embraces her. She turns hastily to the imp.)
Thou hast thy pardon.

LEICESTER.

Yes, knave, but not thy liberty. I must make sure of thee while I discover who thou art.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

You see, fair sir; a devil; but a poor devil and a good devil.

LEICESTER (calling).

What ho! Foster! Varney! Jeannette!

SCENE VIII

THE SAME: VARNEY, FOSTER (in velvet doublet and yellow stockings), JEANNETTE. They rush tumultuously upon the stage.

VARNEY.

What is my lord's will?

(He spies Flibbertigibbet.—Aside.)

My little traitor of an actor! What does it mean?

LEICESTER.

Foster! you do your duty over-negligently. Who gave this fellow leave to enter here?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Nay, scold not the clown, my lord, I came in as we devils do, through the key-hole.

VARNEY (aside).

I breathe again! he hath not sold me!

LEICESTER.

Let this harlequin be consigned to the prison of the castle.

FOSTER.

To the dungeons, my lord; I understand. Whence comest thou, thou red-haired devil?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (with a laugh as he glances at the keeper's costume).

From the marshes,—where I have learned the art of snaring geese with great yellow paws.

(Foster shakes his finger at him threateningly.)

LEICESTER.

Let him be kept in close confinement. Let him have communication with no one, but let him lack nothing, and let no harm come to him. Begone.

(Varney and Foster attempt to put their hands upon Flibbertigibbet. He draws back.)

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

One moment, masters.

(He goes to Amy and kneels at her feet.)

You are so good that you could well dispense with being so beautiful. The imp owes you his life, my lady; he hopes to pay his debt to you.

(Varney and Foster drag him off the stage.)

AMY.

You see that he 's more mad than wicked.

LEICESTER.

Ah me! I have a vague foreboding of I know not what. The solitude of this abode of thine has been disturbed. 'T is the black cloud, the presage of the coming storm. Farewell, Amy. I leave thee with Jeannette.

AMY.

Shall I see you again to-day, my lord?

LEICESTER.

The duties the queen's presence imposes on me will not permit it. But on the morrow, when thou dost hear the great bell of the castle ring to announce Elizabeth's return to her apartments, I will avail myself of that brief respite.

ΑΜΥ.

The queen is fortunate, indeed! She has you by her side more than your wife.

(Leicester sighs profoundly, kisses her, leaves her, and returns.)

LEICESTER.

Farewell, farewell!

(Exit Leicester.)

SCENE IX

AMY, JEANNETTE.

JEANNETTE.

Oh! my lady, if you only knew!

AMY.

Knew what?

JEANNETTE.

In the other part of the castle there is a great uproar and a crowd of men and horses; there 's music on all sides; they 're making ready for great festivities and we sha' n't see them; they say the queen is coming, and we sha' n't see her.

AMY.

I know all that. In these festivities't is not the queen that I would like to be at liberty to see.

JEANNETTE.

You know? Ah! then perhaps my lady also knows . . .

AMY.

What more?

JEANNETTE.

Who the old man may be, who seems, like you, to care but little for the festivities, but confines himself to prowling constantly about this castle.

AMY (hastily).

What say you? what old man?

JEANNETTE.

A tall old man with a white beard, and very venerable; often he may be seen walking upon the hill that overlooks this ruin. He sits among the bushes and hides his face in his hands, or lifts it and looks toward the tower like a hunter waiting for a bird to rise.

AMY.

Does no one know who the old man is? whence he comes? or what his purpose?

JEANNETTE.

No. Foster fears that it may be a spy of Lord Sussex, and has considered whether he should not adopt some expeditious means of getting rid of him.

AMY.

Jeannette, upon thy head, prevent him from annoying this old man! Tell me, where can I see him?

IEANNETTE (looking toward the open window).

Ah! look, look, my lady! there he is yonder, just passing over the brow of the hill!

AMY (looking out).

God in heaven! it is my father!





Moreon de Yours in

Manchon se



THE ROBSTRE

ACT FIFTH SCENE V

. • ระสัตพ์สรา I · ·

She called me slave! I hate her.

3JTZAO HISQ fintf drawing his dagger.) 3 JAO 3HI

When one reflects that with one inch of this steel in that disdainful heart, naught would henceforth obstruct the course of so many brilliant destinies! . . . $i = \# N \Xi_{>>C} \qquad \text{(He takes a step toward Amy.)}$

ALASCO (stopping language

Varney! Varney! a dagger-thrust! Everyone will know that it was thou.

Eth Vista a so a common Vindsor An Yes, my lord, yes.: to a with at your band is so! This day, this year to ve, worthy-of a king. reconciled to Lord Sussex . . LEICESTER (-de). it is the pretext given for our : worth. 'T is also the pretext or . . u.l. and bowing low.) audience which I did gladly grant v Vso, 't is said; reconciliation. bet. I bu do I EICESTER (bowing). Your Majesty . . .

ELIZABETH.

'T is well. Enough. 'T is exercise. By the What count to race with a degree we let us talk of other things is known very man, that I help re in this case. It is at I we lord, that this domain of yours than hanglit talmos implied to the text.

AMY ROBSART

ACT FIFTH SCENE V

VARNEY.

She called me slave! I hate her.

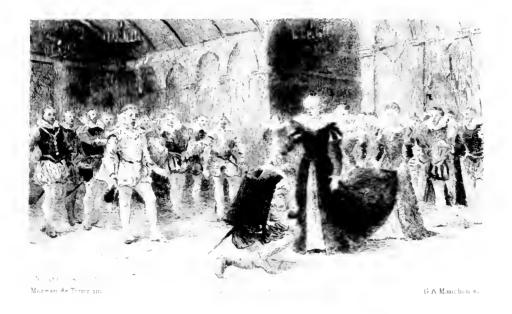
(Half drawing his dagger.)

When one reflects that with one inch of this steel in that disdainful heart, naught would henceforth obstruct the course of so many brilliant destinies!

(He takes a step toward Amy.)

ALASCO (stopping him).

Varney! Varney! a dagger-thrust! Everyone will know that it was thou.



ACT SECOND

THE GREAT HALL OF KENILWORTH CASTLE

SCENE I

ELIZABETH, LEICESTER.

ELIZABETH.

Yes, my lord, yes, my dear host, it must be so! This day, this very hour you must be reconciled to Lord Sussex. Forget not that it is the pretext given for our visit to Kenilworth. 'T is also the pretext of this private audience which I did gladly grant you. And so, 't is said; reconciliation.

LEICESTER (bowing).

Your Majesty . . .

ELIZABETH.

'T is well. Enough. 'T is all I ask. Now let us talk of other things. Know you, my lord, that this domain of yours is in naught

inferior to our domain of Windsor? And the reception we have met with at your hands is worthy of a duke, aye, worthy—of a king.

LEICESTER (aside).

A king!

(Aloud, and bowing low.)

All that your Majesty doth deign to honor with an indulgent glance I owe your Majesty, and, when I lay it at your feet, I but do honor to you with your own gifts!

ELIZABETH.

What say you! to me, my lord, do you owe all that I admire in this castle, all that I am almost tempted to covet?

LEICESTER.

The thing that Leicester is tempted to covet, madame, is not that of which he may claim to be the owner.

ELIZABETH.

What then, my lord? doth not all here belong to you?

LEICESTER.

Doth all belong to me, madame? . . .

ELIZABETH (smiling).

My lord, there 's something of audacity mingled with your respect. Even at this moment when you bend your head so humbly, meseems your thoughts are soaring high.

LEICESTER.

Have I been so unfortunate as to offend your Majesty?

ELIZABETH.

I said not that, Leicester. But when you have within your hands all that man can desire,—titles, wealth, honors,—when everything about this castle attests your power, I fain would know to what this insatiable ambition can still aspire.

LEICESTER.

My ambition! — How little doth your Majesty know Leicester's heart! Take from your unworthy servitor his castles, his earl's coronet, his peer's robe, strip him of all thou hast bestowed upon him; leave naught to Dudley, once more an impecunious nobleman, save his father's sword and the old donjon of his ancestors, and his heart will still retain, in exile and oblivion, the same gratitude and love to his queen.

ELIZABETH (aside).

Love!

(Aloud.)

Yes, yes, I see how deeply moved you are, and I am touched to see it. Dudley, across that brow where naught but joy should shine, methinks I sometimes see a cloud of sadness pass. What 's the matter? Why not lay bare your heart to me? Am I your enemy?

LEICESTER.

In truth, madame, I have a secret.—Such gracious kindness ought perhaps to make me bold . . .

ELIZABETH (softly).

You do not finish, Leicester. Can it be that you dread to have me guess your secret?

LEICESTER.

I dread, madame . . .

ELIZABETH.

Go to; it might be guessed, and still you might have naught to dread.

LEICESTER.

Ah! your Majesty! . . .

ELIZABETH.

The name whereby you now address me, recalls me to myself. Alas! the queen doth now and then forget herself and remember only that she is a woman. Were I, like other women, free to consult my heart, mayhap I then . . .

LEICESTER.

Madame! . . .

ELIZABETH.

But no, that cannot be for me. Elizabeth of England must be the wife and mother of none but her people.

LEICESTER.

I have at least lost naught of the queen's priceless favor?

ELIZABETII.

Nay, Leicester, nay! far otherwise! Methinks we were talking of your superb estate. Why, prithee, do you not wish me to visit the ruined donjon which makes so imposing an effect, from afar, in the park?

LEICESTER.

The ruins, madame, are deserted, and almost inaccessible.

(The door at the rear of the stage opens. An usher appears and stops on the threshold.)

ELIZABETH.

How now? who dares intrude upon us without an order?

SCENE II

ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, AN USHER.

THE USHER (bowing low).

I do but follow your Majesty's instructions. Your Majesty bade me introduce, before the reception of the two noble earls, an aged gentleman for whom my Lord of Sussex craved audience with your Majesty.

ELIZABETH.

Ah yes! I did in truth promise Lord Sussex. 'T is some old officer who fought under him and who has some grievance to lay before me.

LEICESTER (smiling).

A grievance !---Against me, doubtless.

ELIZABETH.

Sussex dare not. But I must needs receive this gentleman.

LEICESTER.

Madame, I will withdraw.

ELIZABETH (with a smile).

Go!

(She gives him her hand to kiss. Leicester bows and exit.—To the usher.)

Admit the gentleman.

(Exit the usher.)

SCENE III

ELIZABETH; afterward SIR HUGH ROBSART.

ELIZABETH (alone).

Why am I queen? The daughter of Henry the Eighth, the wife of Dudley! That can not be. Ah! but he is so great, so noble! his glance so tender and so proud! But to marry him would be to abdicate! What do I say? is it not really he who reigns?

(The door at the rear opens. Sir Hugh, in deep mourning, rushes forward and throws himself at the queen's feet.)

SIR HUGH.

Justice, madame! justice!

ELIZABETH.

Rise, sir. You approach your queen somewhat too boldly.

SIR HUGH.

Nay, I will not leave your feet until you have heard me. Your Majesty will not refuse me the powerful, the last resource remaining to me. You will not turn aside from an old man, a former servitor, who shed his blood for you, an outraged father who comes before the Virgin-Queen to claim his daughter, abducted and seduced.

ELIZABETH (more mildly).

Your daughter has been abducted? Rise, rise! Your daughter has been abducted? Who, I pray to know, dares abduct maidens in this kingdom of England, which God and his saints protect? Your name?

SIR HUGH.

Hugh Robsart, of Templeton.

ELIZABETH.

Are you descended from that Roger Robsart who fought so valiantly for our grandfather King Henry the Seventh, on the field of Stoke?

SIR HUGH.

Yes, madame, and I myself—Lord Sussex will confirm me—have fought faithfully in your Majesty's cause.

ELIZABETH.

Speak then in all confidence; and doubt not that we are as impartial a dispenser of justice as thou art loyal subject.

SIR HUGH.

I had but one daughter, madame, and an old man whose days are numbered may rightfully rest all his joy and pride in his only daughter. But, madame, a vile seducer made his way as a friend into my retirement; he set his serpent's tongue at work, and my daughter, Amy Robsart, followed him.

ELIZABETII.

In very truth I pity you. We, who are crowned queen, know not how any woman can allow herself to be beguiled by man's seductive arts; but 't would seem that it is possible, since 't is your story. What is the seducer's name, sir knight?

SIR HUGH.

He is—madame, he is a man who bath a powerful protector.

ELIZABETH.

Even so, is his protection more powerful than ours?

SIR HUGH.

Forgive me, madame! I am but little wonted to the language of courts, and know not what weight is there attached to words. This ravisher is a squire of the Earl of Leicester.

ELIZABETII.

Of Leicester! The purest man in England hath a seducer in his household! The knavish squire's name?

SIR HUGH.

The cur who follows maidens' skirts and shuns men's swords is one Richard Varney.

ELIZABETH.

Richard Varney. 'T is well. And Amy Robsart, is it not? What hath he done with your daughter?

SIR HUGH.

Alas! madame, she is here, even here, I have seen her at a window of the ruined donjon at the end of the park.

ELIZABETH.

What! Lord Leicester told me that that ruin was uninhabited. Are you sure of what you say? You have not tried to make your way into the donjon?

SIR HUGH.

The door was locked. Doubtless, it is because the donjon is supposed to be deserted that the villain Varney hath concealed my poor Amy there.

ELIZABETH.

Old man, we will look to it that you have justice done. By God's death! we are the mother and the born protectress of all English maidens. A base-born squire defile the heiress of an honorable baronet! Lord Leicester will be beside himself when he hath knowledge of this outrageous deed. We promise you, sir knight, our influence with him against this Varney, whose power you fear. Meanwhile—

(She goes to a table and affixes her seal to a sheet of parchment.)

take this safe-conduct, at sight of which all doors will be thrown open to you, and assure yourself whether your daughter is in truth in yonder donjon. I now dismiss you, for the court waits to be admitted.

(She strikes a bell. The usher appears.)

Attend this gentleman, and admit the two lords with their retinues.

(Sir Hugh Robsart bows, and goes off through a door at the side. The great door at the rear of the stage is thrown open to give admission to the whole court.)

SCENE IV

ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, VARNEY, SUSSEX, SHREWSBURY, LORDS and LADIES, BISHOPS, OFFICERS OF THE QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD; KNIGHTS, PAGES and GUARDS of the suites of the two earls.

(The two earls enter at the same moment through the great door, which is thrown wide open; they salute the queen and take their places, with their retainers, each on one side of the stage. The centre is occupied by the queen's suite.)

ELIZABETH.

My lords, what means this? We summon you hither to bring about a reconciliation betwixt you, and lo! you stand asunder in our very presence! Come forward both and join your hands, which hatred should not sever when my service demands that they be united. (The two earls bow and remain silent in their places.)

Ratcliffe, Earl of Sussex, Dudley, Earl of Leicester, do you hear us? What means this immobility? What means this silence? Will neither of you take the first step?

LEICESTER.

Madame . . .

(Aside.)

A clownish soldier!

SUSSEX (aside).

A dandified upstart!

(Aloud.)

Your Majesty . . .

ELIZABETH.

I know that I am called by that title, and because I am so called you will obey me, noble earls.

(To Leicester.)

Dudley, you are the younger, and he is your guest; 't is your place to forestall him.

(To Sussex.)

My Lord of Sussex, to give me pleasure you would fly to battle, and yet you draw back before a reconciliation!

SUSSEX (without moving).

Madame, I should be overjoyed would Lord Leicester but deign to say wherein I have insulted him; for naught have I said or done that I am not ready to uphold, on foot or in the saddle.

LEICESTER.

And I, too, under her Majesty's good pleasure, have been ever ready to justify my acts and words as fully as any man who bears the name of Ratcliffe.

(The two earls eye each other haughtily.)

ELIZABETH.

My lords of Sussex and of Leicester, which of you two doth long to test the flavor of our bread in our Tower of London? Of one of you we are the guest; but, by God's death! it well may be that one of you will be our guest ere long. For the last time, obey and grasp each other's hand with cordiality.

(In an imperious tone.)

Earl of Sussex. I beseech you.

(ln a soft voice.)

Lord Leicester, I command you.

(The two earls gaze at each other in silence, hesitating still, but at last draw near each other and shake hands.)

LEICESTER (bowing).

My Lord of Sussex, 't is with unfeigned joy . . .

(Aside.)

Traitor, who sets spies upon me beneath my own roof!

SUSSEX (bowing).

My Lord of Leicester, I am most happy...
(Aside.)

A felon who surrounds himself with poisoners and cut-throats!

ELIZABETH.

'T is well! Now lay aside your jealousies and your resentment! Henceforth let my two most faithful servitors be two warm friends as well. My Lord of Leicester, it is our purpose to signalize this visit with which we honor you, by such promotion as you choose to ask. Whom among your officers deem you most worthy of the title of knight?

SUSSEX (in an undertone to Shrewsbury).

You 'll see that she 'll not think of mine!

ELIZABETH.

In this connection, my Lord of Leicester, is there not among your squires, one Richard— Richard—what is his name?

VARNEY (eagerly, in an undertone, to Leicester). My lord, doubtless the queen refers to me.

LEICESTER.

If I may venture to assist your Majesty's memory, is it not Richard Varney?

ELIZABETH.

'T is so. My lord, what think you of this Varney?

LEICESTER.

Madame, he is a faithful servant of his master, a devoted subject of your Majesty. His merit and his zeal are worthy of a higher rank than his, and if . . .

ELIZABETH.

Is he in presence?

VARNEY (eagerly).

At her Majesty's feet.

ELIZABETH.

In that case, my lord, I am happy to undeceive you concerning a vile knave and traitor who casts a blot upon your noble household. This hypocrite, whose worth you vaunt with such good faith, is nothing more nor less than a foul ravisher. Would you believe that he hath dared to defile and abduct the daughter of a worthy gentleman, Sir Hugh Robsart?

LEICESTER (with an exclamation of dismay).
What do I hear? Great God, madame!
(Aside.)

Ah! the spy sent hither by Sussex!

ELIZABETH.

I share your wrath, and will augment it to a higher pitch by giving you to know that the arrant knave hath been so bold as to conceal his victim in this house where you to-day receive your queen.

LEICESTER (in consternation).

Just Heaven! madame, believe . . .

(Aside.)

I am lost.

SUSSEX (in an undertone to Shrewsbury).

What means this? Leicester is deathly pale!

ELIZABETH.

My lord, you seem confused!

LEICESTER.

In very truth, madame, I must confess . . .

VARNEY.

(He kneels, clasps his hands and hangs his head.)
Your Majesty . . .

ELIZABETH.

What hast thou to say? Dost thou avow thy crime? Didst thou abduct this maiden? Is she or is she not in hiding here? Answer.

VARNEY.

Yes.

LEICESTER.

Villain!

(He is about to hurl himself upon Varney.)

ELIZABETH.

My lord, with your permission, we will inquire into this affair alone. We have not yet concluded our examination of your officer.

(Aside.)

How deeply moved he is!

(Aloud to Varney.)

Did thy master, the Earl of Leicester, know of this intrigue? Tell me the truth, whosoever be the head on which it falls, and have no fear. Thy head is under our safeguard.

VARNEY.

Your Majesty would know the truth? This is the whole truth, as Heaven sees me; all this was by my master's fault.

LEICESTER (aside).

The traitor!

(Aloud.)

Thou perjured knave! what dost thou dare to say?

ELIZABETH (with eyes inflamed with rage).

Peace, my lord! Finish thy tale, Varney! None commands here save myself.

VARNEY.

And I will obey you against all, madame. But I would fain confide my master's business to no ears but your own.

LEICESTER.

Serpent, to betray me at your ease.

ELIZABETH.

Thy master's business?

VARNEY.

Even so, madame; craving your Majesty's pardon for my boldness I will entreat you to accord me a moment's secret audience. I could offer my august sovereign an explanation which would be satisfactory to her perchance, but whereby the honor of a most respectable family might suffer, were it made in public. These are delicate matters.

ELIZABETH.

I grant thy request; but if thou seekest to deceive me too, by the soul of my royal father King Henry the Eighth the good people of London shall behold thee on the gallows. Leave us alone an instant.

LEICESTER (aside).

I am lost.

(All withdraw, save Varney.)

SCENE V

ELIZABETH, VARNEY; AN USHER at the door at the rear of the stage.

(The queen sits down; Varney is still on his knees.)

ELIZABETH.

Rise, and speak. What hast thou to say in thy defense?

VARNEY.

I agree, madame, that my crime would be a heinous one, had I, taking undue advantage of a young girl's weakness, seduced her, abdueted and dishonored her, as your glorious Majesty doth do me the injustice to believe.

ELIZABETH.

What is thy meaning, Richard Varney? Am I not well informed? Is some other than thyself the culprit?

VARNEY.

Not so. The queen is well informed, but not informed of everything. Miss Robsart is not dishonored; unless it be dishonoring to be the wife of one of my lord the Earl of Leicester's squires.

ELIZABETH.

What! thou hast married her? This Amy Robsart is thy lawful wife?

VARNEY.

She is my lawful wife. That is the truth, so please your Majesty.

ELIZABETH.

Beware that thou dost not deceive me, Alas! your Ms sirrah! If thou hast married her, why charge is one above him.

the noble earl? What dost thou impute to him? Perchance he doth know naught of this?

VARNEY.

Naught doth he know, in very truth, madame. But, I repeat, he is the cause of all. I pray your Majesty to be yourself the judge.

ELIZABETH.

Say on! I listen.

VARNEY.

Long since, the noble earl, the honor of the Court of England, renounced all thought of marriage. Some secret care, whereof no one dares seek to know the cause, leads him to shun all women. 'T is said that my unhappy master . . . Must I, madame, repeat what people say?

ELIZABETII.

Speak! speak!

VARNEY.

'T is said that, deep-hidden in his heart, my lord cherishes a profound passion, of which the object is so far above him that he may not even hope.

ELIZABETH.

What say you? methinks there are no women to whom the noble earl might not fearlessly aspire.

VARNEY.

Alas! your Majesty must know that there is one above him.

ELIZABETH.

What say you? What do your words intend? I understand you not, Varney.

VARNEY.

In this connection all conjectures are overbold. Often, when he believes no eye is on him, my poor master kisses a lock of hair. I must needs raise my eyes very high to see the like.

ELIZABETH.

Enough! enough! And you were saying that your master . . .

VARNEY.

My lord, so utterly absorbed is he by this passion that possesses him, will listen to no word of marriage for himself, nor even for any of his household.

ELIZABETH.

Poor, noble earl!

VARNEY.

And that is why, having fallen madly in love with Amy Robsart, I deemed it my duty, madame, to conceal our marriage, in order that I might not be congratulated by my lord. Therefore I was right in saying that everything about this mystery and my apparent crime is chargeable to my master.

ELIZABETH.

His fault is not so serious!

VARNEY.

I did but await a favorable opportunity to disclose my secret to him, and if your Majesty will deign to say a word to him in my behalf; I doubt not that he will grant me his forgiveness, by retaining me in my position, and leaving me my wife.

ELIZABETH.

Yes, since Amy Robsart is your wife, Varney, I take upon myself to calm your master's ire.

VARNEY (bowing).

Madame, my gratitude . . .

ELIZABETH.

And we will look to it that Sir Hugh shall have no cause to blush for his son-in-law.

VARNEY (bowing lower than before).

Your Majesty's kindness overwhelms me.

ELIZABETH.

No, Varney, I am well content with the explanation you have given me. Usher, let the doors be once more thrown open.

SCENE VI

ELIZABETH, VARNEY, LEICESTER, SUSSEX, THE WHOLE COURT.

ELIZABETH (after a moment's silence).

Earl of Leicester, give me your sword.

LEICESTER (aside).

First the sword, and then the head.

SUSSEX (in an undertone to Shrewsbury).

Can this mean disgrace?

(Leicester detaches his sword, and hands it to the queen on bended knee.)

ELIZABETH.

Richard Varney, come hither and kneel down.

(Varney obeys. She draws the sword from its sheath. General surprise among the company and emotion among the ladies.)

LEICESTER (aside).

What is her purpose?

ELIZABETH.

(She looks at the sword with satisfaction.)

Had I been born a man, none of my ancestors have loved as I would love the gleam of a good sword. I love to gaze on weapons close at hand. Had I been endowed with beauty, in mirrors such as this I should have taken pleasure in looking at myself. Richard Varney, in the name of God and Saint George we dub you knight.

(She strikes him on the shoulder with the flat of the sword.)

Be faithful, brave and happy. Rise, Sir Richard Varney.

(Great astonishment in the assemblage.)

LEICESTER.

How now! Doth she reward Varney's treason before punishing mine?

ELIZABETH.

The ceremony of the golden spurs and other essential formalities will take place to-morrow in the chapel. Varney, this is the beginning of your fortune, but learn to moderate your aspirations; methinks 't is that mad-cap Shakespeare who speaks of "vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself." Go.

(Varney bows to the ground. The queen turns to Leicester.)

Good lack, my Lord of Leicester, I pray you smooth your troubled brow. The evil that was done hath been repaired.

LEICESTER (aside).

What can he have said?

(Aloud.)

I know not even yet . . .

ELIZABETH.

Yes, my lord, your motives were misunderstood; but the honor of your noble house hath not been tarnished.

LEICESTER.

Madame, I cannot understand . . .

ELIZABETH.

Have patience. But, first of all, your promise to confer a favor on me?

LEICESTER.

To ask it is to confer a favor upon me.

ELIZABETII.

Ah well, my lord, then 't is agreed that you will pardon your squire Varney, who, unbeknown to you, hath married Amy Robsart.

LEICESTER.

He! Amy Robsart!

(Shaking his fist at Varney.)

Caitiff!

ELIZABETH.

Restrain your wrath, my lord, since he was so insane as to fall in love with her, and so wicked as to kidnap her, we may not blame him for having made her his lawful spouse.

LEICESTER.

Insolent knave! didst thou dare?

VARNEY (hanging his head).

My lord and master, there was no other way but this to avert a great disaster, to save what was lost.

LEICESTER.

I cannot contain myself. This temerity, Varney, thou shalt pay dearly for.

ELIZABETH.

My lord, you promised us his pardon.

LEICESTER.

But, madame! such an affront!

ELIZABETH.

The affront he put upon Sir Hugh Robsart was far more grievous.

LEICESTER.

No, madame, no! I must tell you all. Alas! you do not know . . .

VARNEY (hurriedly).

Her Majesty knows all, my lord. She knows of your invincible repugnance to marriage, repugnance so great that you cannot endure the thought of it even among your retainers. She knows that your heart cherishes a mysterious passion.

ELIZABETH (hastily).

· Be silent, Varney!

(Approaching Leicester.-In an undertone.)

My lord, do you deny this secret passion which he hath the audacity to impute to you?

(Leicester is about to speak.)

Silence! I understand you and I pity you: but be prudent, dear Dudley!

LEICESTER.

Madame, such gracious kindness . . .

(Aside.)

O torture!

ELIZABETH.

My lord, we will leave Varney to complete his justification in your sight. Sir Richard Varney, it is our pleasure that your wife, Amy Robsart, be presented at our reception to-day.

LEICESTER (aside).

Great God!

VARNEV.

Your Majesty shall be obeyed. So great condescension honors my wife and myself.

LEICESTER (aside).

Insolent!

SUSSEX (in an undertone to Shrewsbury).

He's higher in favor now than ever!

ELIZABETII.

Come, my Lord of Sussex, come gentlemen all, and enjoy with us the diversions the noble earl's courtesy hath prepared for us.

SCENE VII

LEICESTER, VARNEY.

LEICESTER (indignantly).

What hast thou done, thou knave? To think that my beloved Amy should be deemed by all the court to be thy wife!

VARNEY.

I am indeed guilty, my lord, guilty of unreasoning devotion! For whose sake did I risk that bold declaration? Who was on the verge of ruin? Who was in need of rescue? Was it I, a poor, obscure servant, who, as I possess nothing, have nothing to lose?

LEICESTER.

Enough of your intentions; need you have gone so far as to say that she was your wife?

VARNEY.

Should I have let it be believed that my lady was my mistress?

LEICESTER.

Nay, surely not! but you must-you should have . . .

VARNEY.

What, my lord?

LEICESTER.

Better the direst danger than an insult. would have been far better to discover the whole truth.

VARNEY.

Such was not the meaning written in your furious glance when you believed that 't was I think that she doth love me, Richard?

my purpose to denounce you. Discover everything! Overthrow, with a single word, the most exalted destiny in Europe, fell the spreading oak that casts its shadow over England, reduce to the condition of a paltry country gentleman the renowned Earl of Leicester, who appoints generals, distributes peerages and bishoprics, convokes and dissolves Parliaments, the young and glorious minister for whom the ballads of the day predict an august union! Pardon me, my lord, I confess that I had not the courage—or the cowardice-for that.

LEICESTER.

Ah!, but is grandeur, after all, to be compared with happiness? Rather than abandon my life to the struggles and perils of power, should I not do better, a hundred times better, to live as thou sayest, a quiet country gentleman at the feet of my beloved wife?

VARNEY.

Quiet? pardon me; I said not quiet, my lord. Beware! As I was talking with the queen, when the suspicion dawned upon her that the young girl's seducer might be one greater than myself, I saw the jealous fury of the woman who loves becloud her brow.

LEICESTER.

What word was that thou saidst? Dost

VARNEY.

Aye, she doth love you! she loves you to the point that she would forget everything, sacrifice everything, and crush whatever lies in her path. And a less powerful will than hers has been known to shatter less fragile bonds than yours.

LEICESTER.

She loves me! Thinkst thou that she doth really love me?

VARNEY.

I saw naught but her anger, but you saw her joy a moment since. And now seek out the daughter of King Henry the Eighth, who loves you and believes that she is loved by you; make known to her your vulgar marriage just at the moment when she has it in mind, mayhap, to offer you her royal hand; make known to this queen, when she dreams of making you a king, that there is a Countess of Leicester; go, my lord, and tell Elizabeth Tudor that she has a rival, go—and I tell you that you risk your own head, and not your head alone, but first of all and more than all, another and a well-beloved head.

LEICESTER.

Amy! my Amy in danger! Enough, Varney. Thou art right. What thou didst was well done!

VARNEY (aside).

At last! I have him now.

LEICESTER.

We must save Amy, Varney! she must be thought to be—what thou didst tell the queen.

VARNEY.

Even so! but do not forget that my lady's consent is essential for that.

LEICESTER.

What sayest thou? why so?

VARNEY.

Your lordship heard the queen. It is her will that my pretended wife be presented to her to-day.

LEICESTER.

'T is true. God!—oh! God!

VARNEY.

Think you that my lady can overcome her repugnance to bear my name for a short time? She is Sir Hugh Robsart's daughter, but I am now Sir Richard Varney.

LEICESTER.

It matters not; she is Lady Leicester! and as proud in her virtue as Elizabeth of England in her power!

VARNEY.

Then let us say no more about it; there 's nothing to be done.

LEICESTER.

But we are lost, Varney! she is lost! Do not abandon me! Advise me, guide me.

VARNEV.

Eh! what can I do, my lord? Is it I who have authority and influence over my lady? Have I the power to convince or the right to command her?

LEICESTER.

She loves me too dearly to allow herself to be persuaded, and I love her too dearly to adopt the tone of a master.

VARNEY (folding his arms).

Well, let us then await the effect of the queen's wrath.

LEICESTER.

Nay, nay! I must save her at any price. Hark ye, Varney: spare me a painful and impossible scene with Amy. Speak to her in my name.

VARNEY.

Useless. She would not believe me.

LEICESTER.

Thou canst at least make the trial.

VARNEY.

Waste time when the affair is urgent!

LEICESTER.

Suppose I were to give thee a word for her in writing?

VARNEY.

It must be imperative and decisive! must have full powers.

LEICESTER (after hesitating a moment for the last time).

Ah well, so be it.

(He goes to the table and writes a few words, then hands the note to Varney.)

Will that suffice?

VARNEY (after reading it).

Yes, my lord. We must, however, provide against the possibility of her refusing to appear before the queen, in spite of everything.

LEICESTER.

What should we do in that case?

VARNEV.

There would be but one resource; to take Ah! scornfu my lady, with or against her will, to your thou'rt mine!

estate of Cumnor, and to inform the queen that my wife is seriously ill.

(Aside.)

That is within Alasco's domain.

LEICESTER.

Violence?

VARNEY.

For her own good.

AN USHER (entering).

Her Majesty desires the attendance of my Lord Leicester.

(At a sign from Leicester, he withdraws.)

LEICESTER.

Well, Varney, I intrust her and myself to thy fidelity. I go to wait upon the queen. Oh! what a plight is mine, betwixt two women, one of whom has all the power, the other all the rights!

(Exit Leicester.)

VARNEY (alone).

A plight the more lamentable, my master, in that you are at once weak and ambitious!

(Reading the letter again.)

"Amy, believe whatever Richard Varney says to you. All that he does, he does at my desire and by my command."

Ah! scornful Mistress Amy Robsart, now thou 'rt mine!

1



ACT THIRD

The same stage-setting as in the first act.

SCENE I

VARNEY, ALASCO.

VARNEY.

We are drawing near our goal, Alasco; one effort more and we shall have a king for master. You say that this Flibbertigibbet may be of use to us? In truth, yesterday he did not betray me.

ALASCO.

If you need some one for your expedition who is young, active and intelligent . . .

VARNEY.

'T is simply a matter of kidnapping a person who is in our way, and taking her hence to Cumnor secretly. But who will be our surety for your pupil?

ALASCO.

He is at this moment under the axe, as they say, and will be overjoyed to extricate himself from his embarrassing plight at any price. He is so cunning, however, that it may be that he is out of prison even while I speak to you.

VARNEY.

No, no, the prison is stronger than he is clever. It has but one issue and that issue gives upon the dungeon gallery; so that, if I chose to rid myself of your disciple, instead of closing the door I would open it, having first taken the precaution to draw back the bolt of the trap-door, and I would very

quickly send him down to terrify the vaults of the donjon by a perpendicular visit.

ALASCO.

That is well! but how gain access to him? In thy presence the earl forbade Foster to allow him to hold communication with any person, and his cell, thou sayest, has but one door.

VARNEY.

Aye, but one visible door. But, hark ye, there's another, masked like this one, which communicates by a secret passageway with the same turret that serves thee for a laboratory. I alone know all the turns and windings of this castle.

ALASCO.

Even as Beelzebub alone knows all the turns and windings of thy heart.

VARNEY.

It may be so. Here is the key of the masked door of which I spoke to thee. Go thou and visit Flibbertigibbet, lay before him our propositions; if he accepts them, enroll the devil's imp in our service; if he refuses, take advantage of thy visit to mix with his flask of water . . .

ALASCO.

Enough! Is that all?

VARNEY.

Not yet. I have kept the most important till the end. Thou must prepare forthwith a soporific draught, a potion which, when administered to a woman, for example, will send her off to sleep instanter, so deep a sleep that

she may be driven in a carriage all night long without awaking, and therefore without shrieking or resisting.

ALASCO.

I understand. For whom is this draught intended?

VARNEY.

Ask the stars.

ALASCO.

Must we stop at sleep?

VARNEY.

Old poisoner! I order thee to brew a harmless draught, dost understand? harmless! Dost know the meaning of the word?

ALASCO.

'T is well. And so it is not necessary to attack the house of life?

VARNEY

Look to it that thou dost not, on thine own poor hovel! If thy concoction is not as inoffensive as a glass of water, I swear upon my soul that I will make thee suffer as many deaths as thou hast hairs upon thy head. Old spectre, dost thou laugh?

ALASCO (removing his cap).

Assuredly. Why should I tremble at thy threat? My head is bald, and thou dost swear upon thy soul.

VARNEY.

I hear steps in the corridor. Come now and mix thy soporific potion, harmless, above all things, thou devil's apothecary! I will go with thee to point out the secret passage.

(He pushes him out through the masked door, passes through after him, and closes the door.)

SCENE II

AMY, with a jewel-case in her hand, JEANNETTE, carrying a pelisse which she throws over the back of a chair; afterward, FOSTER.

AMY.

Come, Jeannette, this window opens toward the new castle, and methinks that I shall sooner hear from here the great bell ring, announcing the earl's coming. Let us finish my toilette. My necklace, my bracelets.

(Jeannette takes the bracelets and necklace from the casket, and fastens them about her mistress's arms and neck.)

JEANNETTE.

These pearls are very white; but this arm is whiter still than they. Nathless, they are magnificent! I am sure that each of them is worth more than . . .

AMY.

Fie! Jeannette! all the galleons of Portugal would not pay for them; he gave them to me!

JEANNETTE.

My lady is very lovely thus!

AMY.

May he think as thou dost, child! Alas! if I once had some little beauty, it has undergone

harsh tests. My poor eyes have wept many a tear since I left my father. My father! When I think that he is here, that he is near me! Ah! then I am afraid, and long to see him.

(Enters Foster.)

Why is Foster here?

FOSTER.

I come to announce a visitor for my lady.

AMY.

A visitor for me, good Foster! You forget your orders; that I am not permitted to leave the castle and no person is permitted to enter.

FOSTER.

True, my lady, but the visitor presents this passport.

(He hands Amy a parchment.)

AMY (casting her eyes upon it).

A passport from the queen! Foster, admit him. There is no door in England that must not open before that bit of parchment.

(Foster opens the door. Enters Sir Hugh Robsart.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: SIR HUGH ROBSART.

(Sir Ilugh pauses on the threshold. Amy utters a shriek.)

AMY.

O God! my father!

(At a sign from her, Foster and Jeannette go out.)

SIR HUGH.

Aye, God and your father. Your father, who stands here before you, and God who led him hither.

(Amy rises and runs to him; he draws back.)

AMY (stopping).

Father!

SIR HUGH.

Madame. I know not if that is the title by which you should be called.

AMY.

Ah! what stern words! Call me your daughter. You are still my father.

SIR HUGH.

Your judge, Amy.

AMY.

Oh! do not freeze me with that look! If you but knew . . .

SIR HUGH.

Knew what? go on! I will not condemn you without hearing you.

AMY.

And I have taken an oath; I cannot speak.

SIR HUGH.

Alas! do I not already know a portion of the truth? Did you not leave your father to follow your seducer, Lord Leicester's squire, to this place?

AMY.

Father, you are wrong! appearances . . .

SIR HUGH.

Appearances! Look upon my mourning garb, and look upon your festal garb, are these appearances? Tell me, as whose mistress are you here?

AMY (raising her head).

Father! I am married.

SIR HUGH.

Married! to whom?

AMY.

To whom! Ah! that name may not yet issue from my mouth. I have promised—I have sworn . . .

SIR HUGH.

I doubt the existence of a husband whose wife cannot pronounce his name before her father.

AMY.

In the old days you would have believed my first word . . .

SIR HUGH.

Aye, in the old days.

(The great bell rings.)

AMY.

Ah! the great bell! at last! He soon will come.

SIR HUGH.

Who soon will come?

AMY.

The man who is my husband, father. Listen. I may not name him to you, but you may see him. Know you the face of any of the noblemen of Elizabeth's court?

SIR HUGII.

I have frequented courts less than camps. I know, however, several of those gentlemen, the Earl of Sussex and the Duke of Rutland, Lord Shrewsbury . . .

AMY.

Are those all?

SIR HUGH.

I saw also this morning the young Marquis of Northampton — and I was near forgetting the lord of this castle of Kenilworth,

the queen's favorite minister, your seducer's master, Lord Leicester.

AMV.

(She leads Sir Hugh to the glass door opening on the gallery at the back of the stage.)

Come, father, withdraw to the gallery; he whom you will soon see enter this room is your Amy's noble and honored husband.

SIR HUGH (in a milder tone).

One must yield to your whims, my child.

AMV

You will not regret it, father. One last word. I am about to have an interview with my husband, wherein secrets may be mentioned that it would be a crime for me to betray. Promise me therefore so to place yourself that you can see everything, but hear nothing. Will you promise?

SIR HUGII.

You have my knightly word.

(He enters the gallery.)

SCENE IV

AMY; afterward VARNEY.

AMY (alone).

It may be that I do wrong thus to evade my husband's strict injunctions. I will myself entreat his forgiveness. He will understand that I could not let my father suffer longer. Ah! 't is he.

(Running to the door.)

My Dudley! . . .

FOSTER (announcing).

Sir Richard Varney.

(He withdraws. Enters Varney.)

AMY (in surprise).

You, Master Varney! What means the title by which you were announced?

VARNEY.

'T is the title conferred upon me by her Majesty this very day.

AMV.

Aha! My compliments. But what brings you here?

VARNEY.

My master's express command, my lady.

AMY.

'T was your master himself whom I expected.

VARNEY (presenting the note).

He bade me hand you this.

AMY (sorrowfully).

He will not come!

VARNEY.

Important duties—his enforced attendance on the queen.

AMY (after reading the letter).

I see, sir, that my lord has intrusted you with some message to me. Speak, I am listening. Well, what keeps you silent?

VARNEY (feigning confusion).

Because—I do not know—what I have to say may wound my lady.

AMY.

Nothing that comes from my lord can wound me. Speak, Master Varney.

VARNEY (aside).

She will not deign to call me Sir Richard once.

(Aloud.)

I am instructed, madame, to prepare you for a sad change of fortune.

AMV.

What mean you?

VARNEY.

My lady must know with what irresistible power the will of the august queen who holds England beneath her sceptre is executed.

аму.

Doubtless, and what Englishman is not proud to obey our glorious Elizabeth, who hath made a vow, in face of all her people, to live and die a virgin queen?

VARNEY.

If that twofold title is necessary to command your respect, my lady, your admiration for the queen will soon have occasion to be diminished by half. There is talk of her Majesty's marriage as likely to take place ere long.

AMY.

In truth, there have been princes of Spain and France in the lists, methinks. Hath not King Philip been suggested? the Duke of Anjou? or is it the Duke of Alençon?

VARNEY.

Your ladyship's information is not of the most accurate. The queen who might choose at will among the most splendid royal crowns of Europe, has deigned to cast her eyes upon one of her own subjects.

AMY

How say you? The Duke of Lincoln, perchance?

VARNEY.

He is a Catholic.

AMV.

Can it be the Duke of Limerick?

VARNEY.

An Irishman!

AMY.

I see no other, in that case, save the Duke of Rutland.

VARNEY.

He is married.—True, that would be no obstacle.

AMV

How dare you, sirrah?

VARNEY.

'T is a sad truth in politics, my lady. Crowned heads are not subject to the common law, and marriages that embarrass thrones are broken.

AMY.

How so? the throne is but the throne, and marriage is the altar.

VARNEY.

Ah! but the altar . . .

AMV

Besides, what matters the queen's marriage to me?

VARNEY.

More than you think, my lady. However, Lord Rutland is not the person concerned. Among all our English nobles, not even with a ducal crown does the queen contemplate uniting her own, but with a plain earl's coronet.

AMY.

My God! what lies hidden behind these ominous words? You come to tell me of a change of fortune. The queen's at Kenilworth. My husband keeps high festival for her; he is her favorite—can it be?

VARNEY.

It can be, madame...

AMV.

Just Heaven! Dudley, noble-hearted Dudley, deceive me and desert me! he, a nobleman! a peer of England! 'T is impossible! You lie!

VARNEY.

I have said nothing, madame . . .

AMY.

No, but you have implied everything. Whom are you now betraying?

VARNEY.

I said that my words would wound my lady. Ah! this errand is too painful for me, and I retire.

AMY (detaining him).

No, stay! I fain would know . . .

VARNEY.

I have already said too much; my master did not give me warrant to disclose the whole —far otherwise!

AMY.

What was it that he wished to hide from me? Speak, I bid you, speak!

VARNEY.

Well—the queen—loves the earl.

AMY (overwhelmed).

She loves him! And he?

VARNEY.

He, madame? What would you have? England desires the marriage, France upholds it, Spain offers no objection. The people sing of it in their ballads, the astrologers read it in the heavens, the courtiers in the queen's eyes, and the queen . . .

AMY.

And the queen? finish—in Leicester's eyes.

VARNEY.

I have not spoken of my lord.

AMY.

But I do speak of him! What thinks the earl, what doth he?

VARNEY.

What thinks he? That God only knows. What doth he? As yet he hardly knows himself. And yet a queen's love, a queen who can make a king! the necessity of mounting ever when one has placed his foot on the first rung of ambition's ladder! to lose all or to win all! the throne or the abyss! And then can one refuse to share a bed surmounted by a royal canopy?

АМУ.

I understand!

(She falls, utterly crushed, upon a chair.)

Embarrassing marriages, you say, are broken? Ah! Leicester, why this sacrilege? Wherefore offend thy God by a divorce, and men by perjury? Thinkst thou that I could survive the loss of thy love? Go to! leave death to do thy work! thy ambition will not long await thy freedom!

VARNEY (aside).

The affair 's well under way!

AMY (rising as if impelled by a sudden thought).

Oh! but I think only of myself, what of my father? I think only of my love! What of my honor? I thought to restore to my father his daughter, proud and happy, beloved and respected by her husband. I shall restore her to him, so it seems, abandoned like a mistress, dismissed like a maid-servant, having not been acknowledged as a lawful wife for a single day, a single hour!

(Hiding her head in her hands.)

O shame!

VARNEY (with feigned timidity).

If I might venture a word, I would suggest to my lady that she may cease to be Countess of Leicester, and still be a lawful wife.

AMY (gazing at him in astonishment).

How so? I understand you not, sir.

VARNEY.

At the moment when the Earl of Leicester, drawn irresistibly into the path of ambition, abandons for the pomps and vanities of the throne, a treasure far above all earthly thrones, —if at that moment, madame, a man should come to you, a man less brilliant, but more faithful, who, instead of an illustrious title with a clandestine marriage, should propose to you, with an honorable name, a union to be proclaimed aloud and proudly; if that man...

AMY (interrupting him and struggling to contain herself).

Pardon me! methinks 't is of yourself you speak, Master Varney?

VARNEY.

Even so, 't is of myself, madame; of myself who, instead of the selfish and inconstant heart which now doth turn from you, dare lay at your feet a deep, devoted love; of myself, who would prefer one of your glances to all the smiles of all the queens on earth.

AMV.

You propose to me to become Mistress Varney?

VARNEY.

No, my Lady Varney! such is the title which Sir Richard's wife will bear, no longer an earl's squire, but a free English knight.

AMY.

Even so, my change of name and of condition seems not to me to be so simple and so easy of accomplishment.

VARNEY.

It happens, on the contrary, that in the eyes of many, in the eyes of your father himself, I am even now supposed to be the happy man to whom your heart is given. Pending the final celebration of our marriage, suffer the appearance to continue to anticipate the reality. Permit me to-day, at this very hour, to present you to her Majesty as my lawful wife. Consent that, by that name . . .

AMY (bursting out).

Enough! ah! at length thou hast thrown off the mask, Richard Varney! So this is where thou wouldst lead me by thy wiles! Thou makest Leicester to appear faithless,

that thou mayest make me faithless too! Thank God I saw the snare in time! The desertion that you threaten is a lie! this talk of marriage with the queen foul slander! Oh! what bliss! O my noble Dudley, pardon me for having for an instant lent an ear to this vile knave's impostures!

VARNEY.

You do not then put faith in the note written and signed by my lord's hand?

AMY.

I believe that thy treachery is twofold and that thou dost deceive us both.

VARNEY.

"All that he does, he does at my desire and by my command," says the earl. His desire is that, for his welfare and your own, I present you to the queen as my wife.

AMV.

Silence, impostor!

VARNEY.

Beware! his command is that if you obey not, I shall have recourse to a more violent and awful means . . .

AMY.

Hold your peace, slave!

VARNEY.

Ah! 't is too much! you do not fear to change my love to hatred!

(Advancing upon her.)

You forget that we 're alone, and that you 're in my power.

AMY (in terror).

Help, help, father!

VARNEY (laughing).

Your father? ha! ha! think you that your voice will reach from Kenilworth to Templeton?

AMY.

Father! father!

 $\ensuremath{\mathrm{SIR}}$ HUGH (appearing at the door). I am here.

VARNEY (dumfounded).

Sir Hugh Robsart!

SCENE V

THE SAME: SIR HUGH ROBSART.

SIR HUGH.

I come at your call, my daughter. But, in truth, there was little need of so much caution and mystery to show me your husband!

AMY.

You are strangely misinformed, father. This man is not my husband.

SIR HUGH.

Not your husband! Body and blood!

Doth he refuse?

VARNEY (eagerly).

Refuse! Sir, it would be my greatest joy and honor to call your daughter my wife. The obstacle and the refusal come not from me.

SIR HUGH.

What! come they from you, Amy? You ought . . .

AMY.

Father, a single word . . .

SIR HUGH.

Do not interrupt your father! Assuredly I should have preferred, for the old Robsart race, alliance with a family of more ancient lineage. But Sir Richard Varney hath been but now dubbed knight. Moreover he is like to rise higher still, through the favor of his master, the all-powerful Earl of Leicester,

who, mayhap to-morrow, will be the spouse of Elizabeth and King of England.

AMV.

My God! what say you? Leicester? are you sure?

SIR HUGH,

Knew you it not? I did but repeat what universal rumor says.

AMY (staggering).

Then 't was true! Dudley! O my God!

(She falls upon a chair.)

SIR HUGH (running to her).

My child! she has lost consciousness!

VARNEY (calling).

Foster! Jeannette!

(Enters Jeannette hurriedly.)

See, your mistress is ill.

JEANNETTE (running to Amy's side).

My lady!

(She puts a flask of salts to her nose.)

VARNEY (to Sir Hugh).

Leave her to grow calm, Sir Hugh. Her mind is ill at ease. Your presence agitates and excites her.

SIR HUGH.

But, to leave her thus!

VARNEY.

You shall return, my respected father, when she is in better case to talk with you.

SIR HUGH (with a loving glance at Amy).

My poor child!

VARNEY.

I go with you.

(Aside.)

I must find Alasco.

(Exeunt Sir Hugh and Varney.)

SCENE VI

AMY, JEANNETTE.

JEANNETTE.

My lady! my dear mistress! Ah! she opens her eyes.

AMY (looking about the room).

Father! Where is he?

JEANNETTE.

He will return, my lady. Are you better?

AMY.

Yes, my child, yes, I am quite well. But for the moment, leave me, Jeannette. I must be alone.

(Removing her necklace and bracelets.)

But stay, take away these jewels; they are too heavy for me.

JEANNETTE (after replacing the jewels in the casket).

My lady need but call for me. I shall be near at hand.

(Exit Jeannette.)

АМУ.

(She remains for some time without speaking or moving, turning her eyes restlessly from side to side.)

Is it true indeed that I am not dreaming? Then what Varney said to me is possible! then 't is true! Dudley's crime was confirmed by my own father's voice! Alas! henceforth I am of so little importance in the world, my

proper place therein so little dreamed of, that people will speak before me of what tears my heart, as if it were an indifferent or even pleasant subject! And so, to-morrow, yes, perhaps to-morrow, unless death doth visit Kenilworth meanwhile, there will no longer be a Lord or Lady Leicester! He will be King of England, and I! . . .

(Jeannette enters with a silver goblet on a salver.)

JEANNETTE.

Madame-my lady!

AMY (turning suddenly around).

What do you want? leave me!

(She recognizes Jeannette and continues gently.)

Ah! 't is thou, Jeannette! forgive me . . .

JEANNETTE.

How kind you are, madame,—too kind to be so unhappy!

AMY.

Ah! yes, most unhappy, dear child! But what hast thou there?

JEANNETTE.

A soothing draught that Foster handed me for you, to give you a little rest after all your suffering.

AMY.

Rest, Jeannette! there is no rest for me save in the tomb. But place it on the table, and go.

JEANNETTE,

My lady will drink it?

AMY.

Yes, I will drink it. Go, go, my child.

JEANNETTE (aside).

How pale she is for a countess!
(She places the salver on the table near Amy, and exit.)

SCENE VII

AMY; afterward FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

AMY (alone).

A simple mind to think that wounds at the heart can be healed with bodily remedies, that despair is naught but a disease, and that sleep can be made to visit eyes that cannot even weep! To what end should I drink this potion? And yet, shall I disregard the attentions of these kind servants who prepared it for me, and said to one another: "This will do our poor mistress good!" There are now but these two hearts in all the world that care for me, none but this seneschal and serving-maid who have compassion on the Countess of Leicester. As they choose to take this trouble for me, I ought at least to recognize it. I will drink.

(She takes the goblet and puts it to her lips.)

A VOICE (as if inside the wall).

Drink not!

AMY (checking herself).

Who speaks?

(Alasco's door opens, and gives passage to Flibbertigibbet, who, at one bound, stands in front of the countess.)

I, noble lady. Drink not!

AMY (astounded).

You! who are you?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Do you not recognize the poor devil's imp whose life you saved?

AMY.

Ah! 't is you! But were you not in prison?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Yes, in the Mervyn tower, the tower of the dungeons, behind the bolts of a ghastly cell, reached by a most disquieting corridor, the floor of which sounds ominously hollow.

AMY.

You have succeeded in escaping?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

I doubt if I could have performed that miracle, despite my impish agility. I was released by an old devil whose earthly name 's Alasco. A secret passage, cut in the wall, led from my cell to his laboratory. Oh! but 't was not kindness of heart that led dear Alasco to set me free. He made his conditions. I was intrusted with the delicate mission of carrying you away from here while sleeping. Sleeping what sort of sleep? I cannot say. I was able to distinguish a few words of a hurried colloquy betwixt your Varney and my Varney came to fetch a draught Alasco. ordered by Lord Leicester and to be given to Lady Leicester. That draught is here.

AMY.

Of what is it composed?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

There can be no mistake. It comes from Alasco's kitchen; it is poison!

AMV.

Poison! And Leicester sends it to me?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

'T was he who ordered it to be compounded for you.

AMY.

My God, forgive me!

(She seizes the goblet and puts it quickly to her lips.)

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (seizing her arm).

What are you doing, madame? 'T is poison, I tell you! Did you not hear me?

AMY.

Surely I heard; but since 't is Leicester who sends the poison to me I must needs drink it.

(She puts the goblet to her lips once more; Flibbertigibbet snatches it from her.)

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

No! you saved my life, 't is my turn now! To the devil with this devil's brew!

(He throws the goblet on the floor.)

You will see that within the hour this floor will be as black as if it had been scorched by Cerberus's triple breath.

AMY (fixing her eyes upon the spilled liquid).

What have you done? what will become of me now that I have no poison?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

What will become of you, my noble young lady? By Shakespeare! betwixt a husband who poisons you by way of divorce, and a Varney who covets you, there is but one course sanctioned by immemorial usage in all tragedies, comedies and pantomimes: flight.

AMY.

Why should I fly? and whither should I fly?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Good lack! have you not somewhere a family? a brother? or a father?

AMY.

My father! Yes, you are right, my father! Ah! now I conceive that I am released from my oath! I will tell my father all! I will die, justified at least, and forgiven. Let us fly, yes, let us fly! But, how?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Why, through this window, which is but one floor above the trees in the park. Yesterday I wished to terrify Alasco and so I hid a ladder in the shrubbery yonder . . .

(Leaning out of the window.)

It is still there. I will assist you to climb down. Mere child's play, madame!

AMY.

Let us be gone! I long to find my father!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Stay! have you forgotten nothing?

(He takes the pelisse that lies upon a chair.)

This pelisse . . .

(Looking on the table.)

What is this parchment? A passport from the queen! Divine goodness! let us not neglect this precious God-send!

(He bestows the parchment in his breast.)

Now come, come, madame!

AMY.

God be my guide!

(Flibbertigibbet assists her to climb through the $\operatorname{window.})$



ACT FOURTH

The park of Kenilworth. At the back, in the distance, the roofs of the new castle can be seen through the trees.

SCENE I

AMY, FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

(The latter comes running upon the stage.)

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Your flight's discovered, madame. Alasco and Foster are searching the woods for you. Luckily one is old, the other slow, and this rough, densely wooded corner of the park is marvelously adapted for the game of hideand-seek.

AMY.

We must inquire—ascertain where I can find my father.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

If I could but leave you alone an instant I would soon find a way to bring Sir Hugh Robsart to you. But, hush! some one is coming yonder! God! the Earl of Leicester with his worthy squire!

AMY (bitterly).

Leicester and Varney! alas, the two conspirators!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Come, madame, come! All is lost if they should see you!

(He draws her into a thicket at the left.)

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SCENE II

LEICESTER, VARNEY.

LEICESTER.

Speak quickly! The queen is even now finishing her walk around the lake. I am in haste to join her.

VARNEY (intensely excited).

My lord is my witness that I had given the queen to understand that my wife, being quite ill, was not in a condition to be presented to her. At the same moment word was sent to me that she had fled! My lord, 't is more than resistance, 't is downright rebellion.

LEICESTER (pensively).

I cannot look upon this resistance as a crime, Varney; 't would be to make a crime of her love.

VARNEY.

The countess risks, my lord, involving you in a falsehood . . .

LEICESTER.

She remains firm in her straightforward loyalty. That is the path that I should follow, Varney, and not the one whereinto thou dost lead me.

VARNEY.

This path leads to grandeur and supreme power.

LEICESTER.

But by the way of treachery and falsehood.

VARNEY.

Zounds! my lord, 't is now too late to recede. Elizabeth, blinded less by you than

by herself, has abandoned herself to her passion with a recklessness which permits you to indulge what hopes you please, but which should make you fear the worst. When her eyes were opened, 't would be a terrible awakening. Imagine the possible results of an insulted woman's wrath, when that woman is a queen. Beware! not only your worldly goods and honors are at stake, but your life. And the countess is no more free from danger than yourself. The queen may spare the man she loves; but would she spare the rival she detests?

LEICESTER

'T is because of Amy's peril that I now draw back. I must at any hazard defend her and preserve her.

VARNEY.

And how! One does not wage war with his queen!

LEICESTER (reflecting).

Therefore will I not attempt it. But to-morrow, perhaps to-night, the queen will have taken leave of Kenilworth. And then...

VARNEY (in dismay).

Great God! My lord cannot think of leaving England! my lord will not throw to the winds in exile his hopes of the most brilliant fortune ever dreamed of by mortal man!

LEICESTER.

A fortune upon which yours depends, eh, Master Varney? But I rely upon your devotion . . .

VARNEY.

My lord! . . .

LEICESTER.

Enough! let your people search for the countess! Not to carry her away, but so that

I may speak with her. Come, let us join the queen.

(Exit Leicester.)

VARNEY (following him, aside).

If he leaves the country, I am a ruined man! If he sees the countess again, I am a dead man!

(He overtakes Leicester.)

SCENE III

FLIBBERTIGIBBET, AMY; afterward VARNEY.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

(He emerges from the thicket and looks after Leicester and Varney.)

There they go. Come, my lady; you can safely come forth from your citadel of shrubbery; but look well to your lovely eyes, for I have never seen branches more inclined to caress one's eyelids with their thorns.

(Amy appears.)

AMY.

To think that I must hide from Leicester as from an enemy.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

And I go now to find for you your natural protector against that enemy, your father. See, conceal yourself yonder at the corner of the fountain, whence you may at need return to the thicket.

(He leads her to the spot indicated. Varney reappears at the back of the stage.)

VARNEY.

Methought I caught a glimpse of the knave Flibbertigibbet.

(Spying Amy.)

Oho! the countess! What should I do! Suppose I venture to—? 'T would be a bold stroke! But my audacity has met with success hitherto, and, in my present plight, I must risk everything to save everything.

(He retires.)

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (to Amy).

Await me here, my lady; within the quarter I will be here again with Sir Hugh Robsart.

(Exit Flibbertigibbet.)

AMY (alone).

I abandoned my father to go with my husband, and lo! to-day I have but the one thought, to leave my husband and rejoin my father. O Leicester! can it be that after thou didst seek to force me to become thy servant's wife in name, thou hast sought to poison me? Alas! he who is capable of dastard deeds is capable of crime. Where is he, the great earl, the noble Dudley? All is over! In my heart no longer lives one spark of love for him; scorn has poured water on it all. I do not even hate him.

(She has seated herself upon the base of a statue beside the fountain. Enters the queen.)

SCENE IV

AMY, ELIZABETH.

ELIZABETH (reading a note).

What means this mysterious scroll? "Let the queen betake herself alone to the fountain of Neptune." This is the place.

(Discovering Amy.)

What woman is this?

AMV

The queen! O Heaven! the queen! it is the queen!

ELIZABETH.

How now! Woman, what do you here?

AMY.

Your Majesty—I was but passing by, I will retire.

ELIZABETH.

Nay, speak. You seem in trouble and like to swoon. Be not alarmed, maiden, you are before your queen.

AMY.

'T is for that reason that I tremble, madame.

ELIZABETH.

Be not alarmed, I say! Have you some favor to ask at our hands?

AMV

Madame! Ah! yes, I ask your protection, madame.

(She falls on her knees at the queen's feet.)

ELIZABETH.

Every maiden in our realm hath an undoubted right thereto, if she deserve it.

Rise, and collect your thoughts. Who are you? Wherefore and wherein can our protection be of use to you?

AMY.

Madame-what can I say? I know not . . .

ELIZABETH.

This much resembles madness. 'T is not our wont to ask a question twice without reply.

AMY.

I beseech you—I implore your Majesty. Deign to command that my father be given back to me.

ELIZABETH.

Good lack! first I must know your father. Who are you? who is he?

AMY.

I am Amy, Sir Hugh Robsart's daughter.

ELIZABETH.

Robsart! By my soul, for two days past I have heard naught but of that family. The father asks me for his daughter, the daughter asks me for her father. You do not tell me yet all that you are. You are married?

AMY.

Married! O God! you know? Yes, madame, it is true—forgive, oh! forgive me! In the name of your glorious crown, pardon!

ELIZABETH.

Forgive you, my child? Why, what have I to forgive? 'T is your father's business, whom you have deceived. You see, I know your whole story; your blush confirms it. You allowed yourself to be seduced and kidnapped . . .

AMY (proudly).

True, madame; but he who seduced and kidnapped me, has married me.

ELIZABETII.

Even so; I know that you have repaired your error by marrying your seducer, Varney the squire.

AMY.

Varney! oh! no, madame, no; as there is a heaven above our heads, I am not the vile creature you deem me! I am not the despicable Varney's wife.

ELIZABETII.

How now? What means this? Woman, meseems one hath not need to tear the words from you, when the subject suits your whim!

(As if speaking to herself.)

Whose plaything am 1 now? Some degrading mystery is hidden here.

(Aloud.)

Amy Robsart, 't was in the presence of the noble Earl of Leicester, his master, that Varney declared himself thy husband.

AMY (sorrowfully).

In the earl's presence!

ELIZABETH.

Aye! but prithee tell me whom thou hast married? By the sun that shines upon us I will know whose mistress or whose wife thou art. Come! speak, and quickly, for thou wouldst incur less risk in playing with a lioness, than in deceiving Elizabeth of England.

AMY.

Ask the Earl of Leicester; he knows the truth.

ELIZABETH.

Leicester! the Earl of Leicester! Woman, thou doth slander him! Who set thee on to utter that hateful lie? Who hath suborned thee to insult the noblest nobleman, the most loyal gentleman within this realm? Come instantly with me. But here he comes himself in search of us.

(Raising her voice.)

This way! this way! Even were he dearer to us than our right hand, thou shouldst be confronted with him; thou shalt be heard in his presence, that I may know what man or woman in England is so bereft of sense as to lie to the daughter of King Henry Eighth!

SCENE V

AMY, ELIZABETH, LEICESTER, VARNEY, THE WHOLE COURT.

(Elizabeth has her eyes fixed upon Leicester. Amy is pale as death and almost fainting.)

LEICESTER (aside, with a gesture of dismay). Heaven! Amy with the queen!

ELIZABETH (aside).

How pale he grows!

(Aloud.)

My Lord of Leicester, know you this woman?

LEICESTER (in a low tone).

Madame . . .

ELIZABETH (more forcibly).

My Lord of Leicester, know you this woman?

LEICESTER.

Will the queen deign to give me leave to explain . . .

ELIZABETH.

Is it I whom you have dared deceive? I, your benefactress, your trusting and too weak sovereign? Your confusion seems to avow your treachery. If there be aught sacred on this earth, I swear by that, disloyal earl, your perfidy shall be fitly rewarded!

LEICESTER (abashed).

I have not purposed to deceive you, madame.

ELIZABETH.

Is it so? Ah! my lord, methinks your head is in as great peril now as ever was your father's.

AMY (aside).

O God!

LEICESTER (drawing himself up, and speaking in a firm voice).

My head, O queen, can fall only upon the sentence of my peers. At the bar of the imperial English Parliament I will plead my cause, and not before a princess who thus rewards my faithful services. Your Majesty's sceptre is not a fairy wand wherewith to build my scaffold in a single day.

ELIZABETII.

My lords, who stand about me, you have heard! Meseems we are defied and set at naught even in the castle which this presumptuous man owes to our royal generosity! My Lord Shrewsbury, as Earl-marshal of England you will proceed against this rebel for high treason.

AMY (aside).

Just Heaven! I knew not that I loved him still so dearly!

ELIZABETH.

Raise not your head so proudly, Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Our father Henry Eighth, of illustrious memory, cut off the heads that would not bend. Hunsdon, my good cousin, look to it that the gentlemen pensioners of our suite are in readiness; let this man be placed in custody. Let him give up his sword, and let it be done with all speed! I have spoken.

(Hunsdon draws his sword; three gentlemen advance toward Leicester, who stands calm and unmoved. Amy throws herself at the queen's feet.)

AMV.

No! no, madame! Mercy! justice! He is not guilty! he is not guilty! No one can accuse the noble Earl of Leicester in aught!

ELIZABETII.

By my soul, my child, this is amazing! Did not you yourself accuse him but now? Did you slander him, pray?

AMY.

Did I accuse him, madame? Oh! if I did accuse him, assuredly I slandered him. I alone deserve your wrath.

ELIZABETH.

Beware, mad creature that you are! Said you not a moment since that I had but to question the earl, that he knew your whole story?

AMY.

I know not what I said, madame; my life was threatened, I was misled, my mind was confused . . .

ELIZABETH.

Who is your husband or your lover, Amy Robsart, if, as you declared but now, you are not Varney's wife!

LEICESTER (coming forward).

I must make my confession to your Majesty . . .

ELIZABETII.

My lord, allow this woman to speak.

AMY.

Madame!

(Aside.)

O Heaven!

(Aloud.)

Yes, madame, I am Varney's wife!

LEICESTER (aside).

Too generous Amy! Ah me! if, by sacrificing myself, I need not sacrifice her with me! . . .

ELIZABETH.

So you confess, young woman, that all the confusion you have witnessed was born of your impudent falsehoods and your absurd impostures? You confess that you came hither to tarnish the illustrious Earl of Leicester's fame, and ruin him in our esteem?

AMV.

I needs must confess it.

LEICESTER (aside).

Ah! her devotion tears my heart!

(Aloud.)

Will your Majesty now deign to hear me?

ELIZABETH (smiling upon him).

One moment still, dear noble earl; we pray you, let us have the joy of seeing your innocence declare itself. Your enemies have set this unhappy creature upon you. Let us question her.

VARNEY (stepping forward).

Madame, she is not so guilty as she seems to your Majesty to be! I hoped that her malady might have remained concealed. But the queen must have noticed that her mind wanders.

LEICESTER (aside).

Caitiff!

AMY (aside).

I must carry out the sacrifice even to the end.

ELIZABETH.

In truth, Sir Richard Varney, I incline rather to the belief that your master's enemies have made use of your wife as an instrument to weaken what they have but strengthened. This evening we take our leave of Kenilworth; we will leave orders. Awaiting our final determination, let this woman be consigned to the prison in the tower. Lord Hunsdon, this prisoner is in your keeping. Let her be

closely watched, and give order that no person—no person, even were it the lord of this castle—hold communication with her unless he be provided with a safe-conduct, signed by our own hand. You hear, my lord.

(Lord Hunsdon bows. Amy is led away.)

LEICESTER (aside).

O misery! my beloved Amy!

AMY.

If I die now, at least 't will be for him!





ACT FIFTH

Interior of the round tower of the dungeons. Old Norman style of architecture. Above the walls can be seen the base of the interior cone of the roof. At the centre of the back of the stage an iron door. At the right of this door a small barred window. At the left a couch. A great beam, which supports the roof, runs from side to side of the tower overhead.

SCENE I

AMY (alone).

(She is sitting on the couch, pale, and with disheveled hair.)

The sacrifice is consummated! I know not how it is that, through the sin of loving, I have become almost a State criminal. The queen 's my rival! the queen! and doubtless her wrath will not have fallen on me to no purpose. To-day, a prison; to-morrow—Dudley! they say that thou wouldst take my life. I much prefer to forestall thee and to give it thee. For thee the throne, for me the tomb. I go, and thou 'lt remain with

this Elizabeth, who is a queen. O fearful thought! that while she trembles in thy arms, I shall be lying on the solitary ice-cold pillow of the sepulchre! O agony! how keen and heart-rending is jealousy when one is soon to die!

(She hides her face in her hands and weeps. At this moment a door in the wall at the right, concealed by the carving, turns noiselessly on its hinges to admit Flibbertigibbet, then closes as noiselessly. Flibbertigibbet walks slowly forward a few steps and stands in front of Amy, who has not raised her eyes.)

SCENE II

AMY, FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

AMY. (She does not see Flibbertigibbet.)

Is not this dungeon death? Am I not already cast out from the world of the living? Where is the ear that can hear my voice? Where is the hand that can reach out and touch my hand?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (without changing his position).
Here.

AMY.

Who 's that?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Flibbertigibbet, at your service.

AMY.

You! Pray, are you in truth a sorcerer or devil's imp that you can make your way to this impenetrable dungeon, without, may God forgive you, the door being opened?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Unhappily God has nothing of that sort to forgive me, noble lady.

AMY.

But tell me how you did come in?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

As you will go out, my lady.

AMY.

I cannot understand . . .

FLIBBERTIGIEBET.

'T is very simple.

(He points with his finger to the masked door.) Yonder is a door. АМҮ.

Is it so? And whither does it lead?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

I have already told you; it leads, by a secret staircase, to Alasco's laboratory, and thence to the large room whence you have escaped once already, and whence, thanks to God or the devil, you will escape a second time. But let us make haste! I know not by what lucky chance old Alasco was not in his laboratory. He may soon return, and our expedition would become difficult. Come, come, madame.

(He takes a step toward the secret door)

AMY.

I thank thee, my poor friend, but cannot follow thee.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

What say you?

АМҮ.

Fly quickly. If thou shouldst be surprised here . . .

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

My safety is of mighty consequence! But you?

I remain.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (stamping on the floor).

Look you! do you think that I came here simply to go away as I came? Do you think that I will leave you in this damp, cold dungeon, with the owls and bats, spiders around your bed, and jailers at your door,

while there is pure, free air without, and fields, woods and streams? If you propose to allow yourself to die in this dungeon, you should not have saved my life. Come! follow me! follow me!

AMV.

I cannot, my poor friend. Am I not condemned to death by him to whom my breath and my life belong? If I had my liberty, what should I do with my life? Is not Dudley faithless? Did not Dudley seek to poison me? Did not Dudley abandon me to his Varney? Is not Dudley to marry Elizabeth?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

La, la, la! that is all old, madame. The scene has changed. Your Dudley is not faithless, he did not seek to poison you, he did not abandon you to his squire Satan-Varney, and, far from thinking of marrying the queen, he is at this moment planning an act of high treason against her. I mean your rescue.

AMY (clasping her hands).

Can it be? Dost thou say truly?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

'T was Varney alone who invented it all, planned it all, did it all—he alone is answerable for everything!

AMY.

Ah! that is what I thought at first! O my Dudley, how guilty I have been toward thee.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Nor is that all. Your father knows of your marriage; he has become reconciled to your husband; they are at this moment together concerting measures to save you; they are, it may be, waiting for you without. Do you choose still to remain? Do you wish to make them wait in vain?

AMY.

Oh! no! haste! haste! make haste to take me to my lord! to my father!

ILIBBERTIGIBBET.

At last! The bolt is drawn! Let us not waste a second! follow me.

(He runs to the masked door, and tries to open it, but it resists. He tries again, but to no purpose. He cannot even shake the door. He returns in blank dismay to Amy, who watches him, trembling with anxiety.)

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Locked! the door is locked and bolted on the outer side! Alasco and Varney have returned. That empty room above was but a snare!

AMV.

So you are lost with me for having tried to save me. Unhappy creature that I am! my evil fortune is contagious.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

In God's name say no more to me of myself! I have naught to lose! 'T is you who lose everything!

AMY.

Yes, I have fallen back into the darkness of my dungeon! The last ray of hope is blotted out.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (drawing himself up).

The last? not so, dear noble lady! We must never despair. Your husband and your father are at this very moment seeking to effect your rescue. If one could but look from yonder window!

(He places a wooden stool beneath the window, and stands on tip-toe upon it, trying to look out.)

The sun is sinking behind the trees in the park. We have not a half hour of daylight. Ah! what do I see down yonder in the gathering twilight. Two men wrapped in cloaks. They walk toward the tower. They

pause at the foot of the wall. They measure its height with their eyes. Madame, my lady, 't is they.

AMY.

Who?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Your father and your husband!

AMY.

My father! my husband! Are you not mistaken? Let me look!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET (jumping down from the stool).

Look, madame.

AMY (taking his place at the window).

Ah! God! yes, there he is! 'T is he, my Dudley! Ah! how hard it is to see betwixt these bars!

(Calling.)

Father! my lord!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

The tower is too high for them to hear you. But wave your handkerchief; perchance they will see that.

(Amy waves her handkerchief outside the bars.)

AMY.

Yes, yes, they have spied it! They raise their hats.

(Piteously.)

But I see them and they cannot see me!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

No matter! they are warned, and they will soon set you free.

AMY (shaking her head).

Set me free!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Assuredly. What doors would not fly open before the lord of this castle? He has the power and he has the gold.

AMY.

But those will not suffice to-day. He will not enter this tower. You do not know, thou dost not know, my poor friend, what orders the queen gave. No one can enter here, no one.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

What! not even the Earl of Leicester, the all-powerful minister?

AMY.

He, least of all. No one will enter here, I tell thee, unless he have a safe-conduct signed by the queen's hand.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Excellent! In that case, what we need is the queen's safe-conduct?

AMV.

Surely.

FLIBBERTIG1BBET (taking a parchment from his pocket).

Here it is, madame.

AMY (taking the parchment).

What! the queen's signature! This is downright magic!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Nay, forethought. I found this talisman upon your table yesterday.

AMY.

Ah! yes, I remember. My father's safe-conduct.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

I did well not to forget it as he did. And now, madame, quickly wave your handkerchief once more, and throw this parchment down to your rescuers.

AMY (waving her handkerchief).

They see my signal.

(She throws down the parchment.)

God guide its flight!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Follow it with your eyes. What becomes of it?

AMY,

It falls. It twists and turns. Now 't is among the tree-tops.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

God grant it do not lodge there!

AMY.

No, it falls. At last 't is on the ground, before them.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Have they it?

AMY.

They have it!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

We are saved!

AMV.

My Dudley kisses the paper. He signals to me. Now they both bend their steps toward the postern gate. The corner of the wall steals them from me, I no longer see them.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

'T is but to see them soon again, and nearer at hand, noble lady.

AMY (leaving the window).

God be praised!

(She glances at her disordered dress.)

He is coming. In what plight am I to receive him? Hair in disorder, my dress all awry . . .

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Most promising sign! sadness gives place to coquetry! But methinks I hear steps.

(He listens at the iron door.)

'T is the step of more than one. Why in God's name does the floor of the corridor give forth such a hollow sound?

(A key is heard in the lock.)

They 're opening the door, madame!

(The iron door opens. Enter Sir Hugh and Leicester.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: LEICESTER, SIR HUGH,

AMY (throwing herself into Leicester's arms). My lord!

LEICESTER (straining her to his heart). My best beloved!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

She was as pale as a corpse, and now she 's as rosy as a bride. These maids change color more often and more quickly than the star Aldebaran.

LEICESTER.

Well mightst thou look coldly on me, Amy. How shall I ever undo the wrong I did thee? Oh! forgive me!

AMY (still in his arms).

Ah! 't is from thee, my dear and noble lord, that all forgiveness must proceed. Of what did I dare suspect thee?

(To Sir Hugh.)

And, father, have you too forgiven me? do you forgive me?

SIR HUGH (throwing his arms about them both). My daughter!-my child!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Bethink you that the door stands open: why do we delay?

LEICESTER.

He is right, time is precious. Listen, my beloved; all is prepared for thy flight and mine. An hour hence a carriage will await when I leave the queen to go with thee, I

us in the wood. Sure friends, Strathallan and the Earl of Fife, will cover our flight. A brig, ready to make sail for Flanders, will receive us on the coast; and ere the dawn we shall be sailing away toward happiness, both set free, thou from thy prison, I from the court.

AMY.

How now, my lord! for me you will abandon honor, rank, favor, fortune, and the glorious stage where Europe gazes admiringly What sacrifices for a poor upon you? woman!

LEICESTER.

That poor woman, as thou namest her, has made many a harder sacrifice for me.

AMY.

You condemn yourself to exile!

LEICESTER.

Art not thou my country?

AMY.

But, Dudley, thou dost renounce everything.

LEICESTER.

Nothing at all, for thou art everything to Dudley.

AMY.

Who knows? perchance a throne!

LEICESTER.

A throne? Nay, something tells me that,

renounce naught save the chance of ascending, some fine morning, not the steps of a throne, but the ladder of a scaffold.

SIR HUGH.

My lord, do not forget that at this hour this imperious queen awaits your coming.

LEICESTER.

True; we must leave thee, dearest wife.

AMY.

What! do you not take me with you?

LEICESTER.

Nay, not yet. An hour hence the queen will have left Kenilworth behind. At this moment her retinue still throngs the castle, and thy flight would be impossible. I go to hold her stirrup; as soon as she has taken her departure, I will return. Kenilworth will be deserted, and, under cover of the darkness, I will carry thee away from this ghastly dungeon.

AMY (smiling).

'T will be the second time that you have carried me away, my lord—Ah! pardon me, father!

LEICESTER (to Phbbertigibbet).

Do thou go with us, devil's imp; I need thy assistance to put everything in readiness while I am in attendance on the queen.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

At your service, my lord.

$\Lambda M Y$.

Must I remain alone?

LEICESTER.

An hour at the most, my dearest love.

AMY (clinging to his neck).

Do you remember, my lord, that in the early days of our love the blast of your horn told me of your presence in the Devon woods? To-night, you must make known your return to me in the same way.

LEICESTER.

I promise. Be happy and have no fear. Farewell.

AMY.

Farewell.

(They embrace. Exit the earl, with Sir Hugh and Flibbertigibbet.)

SCENE IV

AMY (alone).

Farewell!—there 's something most impressive in that word; it is as if one were resigned to an eternal parting!

(She sits upon the bed and muses.)

They are gone; I can no longer hear their steps. Once more I am alone. I know not why sad thoughts return and fill my mind. Am I not, shall I not soon be happy? Shall I not soon be free—free to see and hear him—free to love him? My head and body are worn out; the varying emotions of this day have overpowered me. Would it not be well

to take a little rest before setting out upon this journey.

(She lies down upon the bed.)
This journey that 's to lead me to perfect bliss!

(Gradually her voice becomes weaker, and her mind seems to grow dull.)

O my Dudley! what a blessed future! Exile, but exile where thou wilt be; some sequestered retreat; long days with thee, beside thee; a life of love and freedom from all care. God grant it 's not a dream!

(She sleeps.)

SCENE V

VARNEY, ALASCO.

(As Amy falls asleep, the masked door is partly opened; Varney thrusts his head in and makes sure that the countess is asleep; then he enters, leading Alasco by the hand; the latter follows him with apparent impatience.)

VARNEY.

She is asleep!

(To Alasco.)

Zounds, man, come! come quickly!

ALASCO (placing a lighted copper lamp upon a stool).

Why do you thus drag me about after you? My time is not so cheap that I can waste it listening at doors in your company. I was engaged upon a task of supreme importance. I have three retorts upon the furnace, filled with a substance of such dangerous properties, that the least drop falling in the fire would overturn this tower.

VARNEY.

Alasco, didst thou hear?

ALASCO.

I did not listen.

VARNEY.

The Earl of Leicester means to fly, to fly with his wife! and a few hours hence, if his purpose be accomplished, the favorite will be an exile, and the favorite's squire will fall from the height he has attained, a hundred times lower than the point at which he began to ascend!

ALASCO.

What matters it to me?

VARNEY.

What matters it to thee? The exile's property will be confiscated, and the domain of Cumnor will undergo a like fate with the rest. Farewell to thy laboratory, thy workshop, thy pharmacy of philters, thy poison kitchen! Thou seest that it matters to thee!

ALASCO.

Even so! What is the source of all these woes of thine? The flight of this bird. Go warn Elizabeth, and the cage will not open.

VARNEY.

Better than that! 't will open to receive the earl. Elizabeth will send him to consummate his nuptials with Amy upon the scaffold. And what shall I have gained by that?

ALASCO.

The queen will hold you dear for having undeceived her.

VARNEY.

Hold me dear? she will hold me in horror rather! If I were not punished for my good offices, the best I could expect would be to be forgotten.

ALASCO.

Then do not tell her that 't was the earl who planned his wife's escape.

VARNEY.

In that case he remains powerful and a favorite, and, sooner or later, under one pretext or another, his vengeance will fall upon me.

ALASCO.

Well, if all ways are bad . . .

VARNEY.

Not all!

(He draws near Alasco and lowers his voice.)

Alasco, if fate should strike this woman down, this Amy, who leads the earl into so many acts of madness; if she should disappear from the world; if she should die—a natural death,—what think you would become of Leicester?

ALASCO.

He would forget her. He would remain the fortunate minister, the all-powerful favorite, the great earl who gives festivals and spectacles to queens.

VARNEY.

And we, Alasco, should follow in his train, in peace, rising as he rose, and finding ourselves earls or barons on the day when he awoke a king.

ALASCO.

As thou sayest, — Baron Varney, Prince Demetrius Alasco!

VARNEY.

Thus the only obstacle between ourselves and fortune is this woman's life.

ALASCO.

And how dost thou propose to overcome that obstacle?

VARNEY.

Remove it.

ALASCO (with a gesture of dismay).

Oho! I thought that thou didst love this woman?

VARNEV.

She called me slave! I hate her.

(Half drawing his dagger.)

When one reflects that with one inch of this steel in that disdainful heart, naught would henceforth obstruct the course of so many brilliant destinies! . . .

(He takes a step toward Amy.)

ALASCO (stopping him).

Varney! Varney! a dagger-thrust! Everyone will know that it was thou.

VARNEY.

Thou 'rt right. But hast thou not—hast thou not some elixir, some poison of which one dies as soon as one doth breathe it?

ALASCO.

Poison! they 'll say that it was I.

VARNEY.

Then what are we to do?

ALASCO.

Whatever pleases thee. I do not choose to have a hand in the affair. A woman! a sleeping woman!

VARNEY.

Thou 'rt a coward!

ALASCO.

Moreover, I have already told thee that my furnaces await me.

VARNEY.

Thou 'rt a fool!

(He seems to reflect for a few instants.)

What 's to be done? What 's to be done? A natural death? Nothing that will leave a trace of my handiwork?

(Striking his forehead.)

Ah! now I have it! Is not this tower the tower of the dungeons? Alasco, in the floor of the narrow corridor that gives access to this dungeon there is a trap-door, just in front of yonder threshold.

ALASCO.

Well?

VARNEV.

One need but touch a spring, and the supports which hold the trap-door are thrown aside. It then remains in place by virtue of the adhering force of the surrounding planks, and there is nothing whereby the eye can detect the change; but the slightest pressure is enough to hurl it down into the abyss it covers.

ALASCO.

Well?

VARNEY.

'T is a fearful abyss. The fall is from the summit of this turret down to the lowest vaults of the castle.

ALASCO.

Well?

VARNEY.

The earl has left the door ajar. Wait for me one moment.

ALASCO.

Where goest thou?

VARNEY.

I go to press the spring which removes the supports of the trap-door.

(He goes out through the iron door, which has remained open, and half closes it so as to conceal the corridor.)

ALASCO (alone).

What infernal scheme has he in mind? And my elixirs are evaporating overhead! Well, Varney?

VARNEY (returning).

'T is done. Now, woe to him who puts his foot upon that trap! though he were light-footed as a sylph, he would go down with it into the depths.

ALASCO.

Varney, thou dost not intend to take the prisoner and cast her into yonder pit?

VARNEY (with a bitter smile).

Fie! what brutality! I shall not lay hand upon the prisoner.

ALASCO.

In that case, I fail to comprehend.

VARNEV (lowering his voice).

Didst thou not hear the earl promise his wife to announce his return by a blast upon his horn?

ALASCO.

So. What then?

VARNEY.

What then? When the captive hears the blast upon the horn thinkest thou that, seeing yon door open, she will have patience to wait until her husband shall have joined her here? Thinkst thou she will resist the pleasure of embracing him a few moments sooner? Thinkst thou that she will hesitate to run to meet him? And if she doth in her excitement cross the threshold, if the rotten supports of the trap-door give way beneath her, if she falls—Why, what can I do? Shall I have been to blame? 'T would be a sad mischance.

ALASCO.

To find in her love a means of putting her to death! Varney, thou wouldst boil the lamb in its mother's milk!

VARNEY.

Now, let us withdraw. The earl must soon return. Go back, if thou wilt, to thy infernal chemistry. I remain on guard behind the masked door.

(They go out together through the secret door.)

SCENE VI

AMY (alone).

(Profound silence reigns in the dungeon, which is but dimly lighted by the copper lamp which Alasco has left, forgotten, upon the stool. After some moments of silence, the clear note of a horn is heard without. Amy wakes with a start.)

What sound was that? was it not the horn in the distance?

(She listens.)

Nothing but the wind whistling in the crevices of the wall. Perchance 't was that awoke me. So much the better! I had a fearful dream.

(The horn is heard again.)

But no, I was not mistaken, 't is the horn in truth; 't is the signal.

(She runs to the window.)

Torches, horses and armed men. Yes, there is my Dudley! He dismounts, he assists my

father to dismount. How noble he is, my Dudley! Ah! that door was left ajar; I will run to meet him, and spare him the necessity of coming to this dungeon.

(She wraps herself in her veil and kneels.)

O my God, to thy keeping do I now commend myself.

(The horn is heard a third time.)

Dudley, I am thine!

(She takes the lamp from the stool, pushes the door open and disappears. As the door swings back a piercing shriek is heard and a great noise like that made by the falling of a heavy piece of timber. At the sound the little door is half opened, and Varney appears, pale and trembling.)

SCENE VII

VARNEY (alone).

(He enters slowly and with a bewildered air.)

Is it over? Yes, I heard the noise. No one here. 'T is done. Ah! well, 't is finished! Can it be that thou 'rt afraid, Varney?

(With a ghastly sneering laugh.)

The lamb has fallen into the wolf's den, is that a reason why thou shouldst tremble? If I were to go and look?

(He walks toward the door, then recoils and walks back.)

Look—to what end? I heard, and that 's enough. Rejoice, Richard Varney! from this hour dates thy fortune!

(Suddenly a great uproar is heard behind the masked door. It is thrown violently open, admitting a flickering red light, and Alasco, pale as death, rushes with a shriek of horror upon the stage.)

SCENE VIII

VARNEY, ALASCO.

ALASCO.

Ah me! woe! woe!

VARNEY.

Alasco! in God's name what 's the matter?

ALASCO.

Malediction on us!

VARNEY.

What sayest thou?

ALASCO.

Varney, my alembic has exploded, the tower's half in ruins, and the castle on fire!

VARNEY.

What sayest thou, villain? The castle is on fire?

ALASCO.

Look!

(The glare becomes higher and brighter. A sound like the hissing of flames can be heard outside.)

VARNEY.

Great God!

ALASCO.

We have no time to lose. The conflagration makes rapid progress. Let us fly!

VARNEY.

Let us fly!

(They run to the iron door. Alasco pushes it open and recoils in horror before the yawning gulf outside.)

ALASCO.

Demon! what is this yawning pit?

VARNEY.

The trap!

ALASCO.

A chasm not to be crossed! Flight, rescue, both impossible. On that side fire, on this the chasm. Die! we must die!

VARNEY.

'T is thy fault, poisoner!

ALASCO.

'T is thine, assassin!

VARNEY (pointing to the flames).

Who caused you fire?

ALASCO (pointing to the open trap).

Who opened you deep hole?

(The fire gains ground, the flame comes in through the masked door, the roof crumbles, the walls sway and tremble, and a shower of sparks begins to rain down from the top of the tower. At this juncture Flibbertigibbet passes through an opening in the roof, and appears standing on the transverse timber.)

SCENE IX

VARNEY, ALASCO, FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Varney! Alasco!

VARNEY (raising his head).

Who calls us? Is it hell?

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Hell is content to await your coming. Do not reproach each other! I caused the explosion of the alembic. 'T is I who punish you.

VARNEY.

Ah! cursed devil's imp!

FLIBBERTIGIBBET.

Demons of that sweet angel! follow her into the yawning pit. You will not follow her beyond it!

(He disappears through an opening in the roof, which falls in and buries Varney and Alasco.)

NOTE TO AMY ROBSART

Amy Robsart was acted February 13, 1828, at the Odéon, under the management of M. Sauvage. We read in Victor Hugo Raccuté, etc.:

"It was agreed that Victor Hugo's name should not be pronounced; but some chance phrase or some indiscretion betrayed him, and the manager, overjoyed, lost no time in spreading the report that the drama was written by the author of *Cromwell*. Victor Hugo remonstrated in vain; the manager, seeing that the name was a drawing card, continued to cry it from the house-tops.

"The play was much hissed. M. Victor Hugo, who was very glad to give away a success, did not wish to give away a failure . . ."

Without actually declaring himself to be the author of the play, he assumed the responsibility for the passages that were hissed in the following letter to the newspapers:

"PARIS, 14 February, 1828.

" To the Editor:

"Since the success of Amy Rebsart, the first essay of a young poet whose fortune is dearer to me than my own, has met with such bitter opposition, I hasten to declare that I am not altogether a stranger to the work. There are, in the drama, some passages, some fragments of scenes, which were written by me, and I ought to say that they are the passages which were, perhaps, most loudly hissed.

"I beg you, monsieur, to publish this statement in your journal to-morrow, and to accept, etc.,

"Victor Hugo.

" P. S — The author has withdrawn the play."

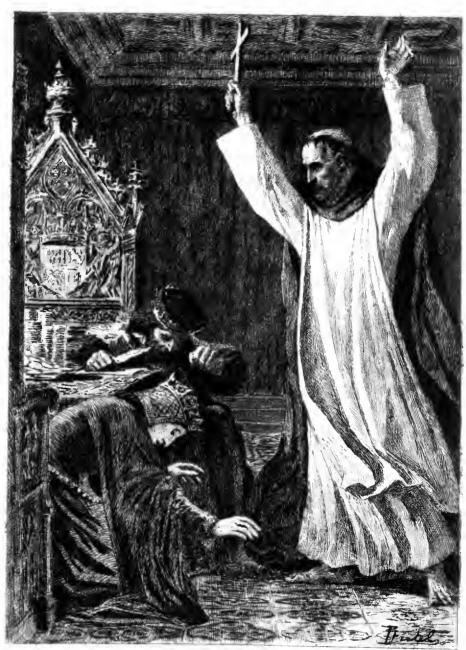
The play was a complete failure and was performed but once.

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PART FIRST FROM MONK TO POPE







41

17 Courter .

FORQUEMADA

PART TWO

ACT SECOND SCENE V

THE QUEEN.

My fath ri-

TOROLFMADA (looking them both in the face).

P. scorrsed, O.King! Be thon accursed, O queen!

THE QUEEN.

Mercy

TORQUEMADA (stretching his arm over their heads).

To your knees!

1 20

(The queen falls on her knees. The king hesitates, shuddering.) Both!

(The king talls on his knees.)

(Pointing to Isabella,)

Here the queen.

(Pointing to Ferdinand)

And there the king. A heap of gold between. Ah! you are king and queen!

(He seizes the cruths and raises it above his head.)

Behold your God.

TORQUEMADA

PART TWO

ACT SECOND SCENE V

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To your knees!

(The queen falls on her knees. The king hesitates, shuddering.)

Both!

(The king falls on his knees.)

(Pointing to Isabella.)

Here the queen,

(Pointing to Ferdinand.)

And there the king. A heap of gold between. Ah t you are king and queen!

(He seizes the crucifix and raises it above his head)

Behold your God.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

TORQUEMADA

DON SANCHO DE SALINAS

DONNA ROSA D'ORTHEZ

GIL, MARQUIS DE FUENTEL

KING FERDINAND

POPE ALEXANDER VI

FRANCIS DE PAUL

GUCHO, a clown

THE PRIOR

BISHOP OF SEO DE URGEL

MONKS, SOLDIERS



ACT FIRST

THE IN PACE

Catalonia. Among the mountains on the frontier. The Lateran monastery, a convent of the order of St. Augustine and of the discipline of St. Ruf.

The old cemetery of the convent. General appearance of an uncultivated garden. The time is April. Bright sunshine and flowers in bloom. Crosses and tombs in the grass and under the trees. Ground dotted with graves. At the back of the stage the monastery wall, very high, but falling in ruins. An enormous breach extends nearly to the ground, and gives access to the open country. Close beside a huge square fragment of the wall stands an iron cross, planted on a grave.

Another very high cross, with the mystic gilded triangle, stands at the top of a flight of stone steps, and overlooks the whole cemetery.

In the foreground, even with the ground, a square opening, surrounded by flat stones on a level with the top of the grass. At one side a long flagstone, apparently intended to cover the opening. In the opening can be seen the topmost steps of a narrow stone staircase which leads down into the hole. It is a sepulchre, the lid of which has been removed, disclosing the interior. The long flagstone is the lid.

As the curtain rises the prior of the convent in the garh of an Augustinian monk is upon the stage. At the back of the stage an old monk, in the garb of a Dominican, is walking slowly across, bending his knee at each cross that he passes. He disappears and the prior remains alone.

SCENE I

THE PRIOR OF THE CONVENT; afterward, A MAN.

(The prior is bald, with a circle of gray hair and a | brush. What havoc time, th' old renegade, white beard; frock of coarse dark cloth. He scrutinizes the wall, and wanders pensively about among the tombs.)

THE PRIOR.

doth work in sacred places.

(He examines the breach in the wall.)

A breach through which a novice might Convent in ruins. Brambles and under- escape. 'T would seem that the old wall is

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weary from having stood erect too long, and grudges further service. It doth our privileges much resemble, for they are crumbling too, alas! They have their rust, they have The sacred branch doth their breaches. wither in our hands. The popes wax slothful in the struggle. Ah! within our walls to-day the princes are at home; they hover, like the eagle's shadow, threateningly above our heads. An end of discipline, an end of charters and of regulations. Lower we bend and lower every day for fear of stripes; we have no certainty that we have not among us court intrigues and villainies. They force us to bring up their little highnesses in secret and promiscuously, both girls and boys; bastards, perchance, who knows? and we obey.

(He pauses before the open tomb.)

If ever any act of justice is performed in our community, 't is on one of ourselves.

(He gazes at the wall.)

Our old structure is tottering like ourselves, and Christ is bleeding, and we know that, in darkness and in shame, more and more helplessly, we grope about.

(Enters, through the breach in the wall, a man wrapped in a cloak with his hat pulled over his eyes. He pauses, standing on the heap of ruins near the breach. The prior espies him.)

THE PRIOR.

Begone, sirrah!

THE MAN.

Nay.

THE PRIOR.

Away with you! Know, clown, that this is holy ground.

THE MAN.

Even so?

THE PRIOR.

A famous cloister.

THE MAN.

Pish!

THE PRIOR.

By day, no one comes hither save the monks alone; by night, the shades of the departed in their shrouds. For him who enters here there is no mercy. The axe if he be duke, the rope if he be peasant. None save they who are of the convent may come within these walls. Beware! Aroynt thee, knave!

(With a haughty laugh.)

Unless thou art the king!

THE MAN.

I am he.

THE PRIOR.

You, the king!

THE MAN.

So am I called.

THE PRIOR.

What proof have I thereof?

THE MAN.

This.

(He waves his hand. A troop of armed men appears in the breach. The king points out the prior to the soldiers.)

Hang that man.

(The soldiers pour in through the breach. They surround the prior. With them enter the Marquis de Fuentel and Gucho. The marquis is a gray-bearded man in a rich Alcantara suit. Gucho, a dwarf, dressed in black, with a cap and bells. He has a fool's bauble in each hand, a figure of a man in gold, and one of a woman in copper.)

SCENE II

THE PRIOR, THE KING, MARQUIS DE FUENTEL, GUCHO, THE KING'S ESCORT.

THE PRIOR (falling on his knees).

Mercy, monseñor!

THE KING.

So be it—on condition. What art thou in this convent?

THE PRIOR.

Prior.

THE KING.

Hark ye. Thou 'lt keep me posted touching everything that comes to pass here. The gibbet, if thou liest; if thou sayest true, thy pardon.

(He leaves the prior in the midst of the soldiers, and approaches the Marquis de Fuentel at the front of the stage.)

Let us begin by saying our prayers, Marquis.

(He tosses his cloak to a servant behind him, and appears in a modest Alcantara suit with a huge rosary at his side. He tells his beads silently for a few moments. Then he turns again to the marquis.)

The queen is far away and I exist. To be alone is bliss. To be a widower would be still better. I laugh for joy.

GUCHO (sitting on the ground with his two baubles in his arms against the corner of a tomb. Aside).

The world doth weep.

THE KING (to the marquis).

I have my reasons, thou wilt know them soon, for coming to inspect this convent close at hand. Come.

(He motions to him to follow him a little apart, near the tomb against which Gucho is crouching.)

THE MARQUIS.

I listen to the king.

GUCHO (aside).

I listen to the wind which whispers to me overhead the things you do.

THE KING (to the marquis).

I wish thy counsel upon certain secret matters.

GUC∏⊖ (aside).

Bah! provided that I eat and sleep, why all is well.

THE MARQUIS (to the king).

Shall we send Gucho hence?

THE KING.

No. He doth naught understand.

(To Gucho.)

Lie there.

(Gucho makes himself as small as possible in the shadow behind the king. The king draws near the marquis.)

Marquis, I love women beyond measure. The thing that pleases me in thee is that thy morals are unmentionable, or were. Later, old fellow, thou didst turn pious. That is well. That too doth please me. Man's worth depends upon his faith, for that alone can wash away our sins.

(He makes the sign of the cross.)

THE MARQUIS.

This convent, whereof the king doth purpose to keep watch upon the practices, is under the control of two superiors, one at Cahors, one at Ghent.

THE KING.

Thou art reputed to have been a monster of intrigue. So art thou still. 'T is said that women, pretty women too, in former days did foolish things for thee, good man. That thou wert once a page, a charming boy; that seems impossible, but, in good sooth, why so? The morning smiles, and still the day is dark; that 's often seen. Knowst thou that there 's a pretty anecdote concerning a young court attendant, said to have been thou? Hast thou ever called thyself Gorvona?

THE MARQUIS.

No. Wherefore?

THE KING.

To hide thyself, 't is said, by craft and fraud, and for a love-affair with a fair princess.

THE MARQUIS.

Never!

THE KING.

I was told the whole long story of a dull-witted king to whom thou gav'st an heir. But the authorities are not agreed touching the country. In all likelihood 't is pure invention.

THE MARQUIS.

Nothing more. You have made me a marquis and they seek to do me evil in your sight.

THE KING.

And they are right. But 't is my rule, whether they say what 's false or what is true, to hold myself above what man invents. Naught reaches me, for I am king. Thy origin, midst lackeys, aye, and clowns, thy low, base, slippery beginnings suit my whim. No one can say with certainty, not even thine own self, who was thy father. I do admire thee for that thou dost so cunningly hide thy

identity while living in the public eye. cormorant's nest, the hole where lurks the basilisk, are the fit starting-points of a life like thine, erratic, wandering, enslaved. I have made thee count and marquis, grandee of Castile; a mass of worthless dignities, wellearned but ill-gotten. To act by cunning, or at need by force, is easy for thee; thou wouldst hold thine own with a whole council, ave, or turn them out of doors e'en though the devil were among them. Thou canst be bold, and yet lose not thy subtlety. Though made to crawl, thou dost defy the tempest. If need be thou wouldst risk thy life for some rash stroke, and, old as thou art, wouldst draw thy sword therefor. Thou givest evil counsel, but dost not follow it. It is thy faculty to be of nothing innocent, of nothing guilty, and I esteem thee capable of anything, even of loving. 'T is common rumor that thou didst rise from serving-man to bandit, from bandit to courtier. For my own part, I laugh as I look on at thy manœuvring. It pleases me to see thee twine thyself about the serpents. Thy schemes, which thou dost quietly, and with a pensive air, concoct, a sort of floating web that loses itself in the darkness, thy wit, thy talents, thy good fortune, and the mire wherein thou wallowest, all tend to make of thee a creature strange to contemplate, a shuddering, ungrateful thing, whose services I love to have at my command.

THE MARQUIS.

O king, the Tagus, the Ebro and the Guadalquivir are yours; your Majesty hath added Naples to Castile, and the French king is vanquished in the jousting; Africa doth fear my king, whose shadow oftentimes ere now hath met the sun rising o'er Algiers; Sos was your birth-place, so near to Navarre that you have a just claim upon her, and I avouch that you

were rightful master of that kingdom while you lay sleeping in your cradle, for never was king born for nothing; though a Catholic king, you have set foot upon the church wherein republican ideas are taking root; the pope, for fear of thee, doth quake before the king, and his church-bell is hushed before your loud alarum. Your flags wave from Etna to the shores of Hindostan, and with you is Gonzalvo de Cordova. Moreover, you win battles single-handed. Young as you are, you tower above other monarchs like a patriarch, and when a priest would take an oar in any of your galleys, with faltering speech Rome hastens to explain away its wrath. O conqueror of Toro, mighty king! All words seem weak and paltry in your presence, and die upon my lips. My lord, I am devoted to your interests.

THE KING.

'T is false.

THE MARQUIS.

Your Highness . . .

THE KING.

Spare me your wearisome chatter of devotion, my dear friend. To thee I am a mystery, to me thou art by no means clear as glass. I play the generous prince and thou the saint, but in our hearts we both are filled with gall against each other. I execrate the slave, thou dost detest the king; thou wouldst assassinate me if thou couldst, and I mayhap will have thy head shorn off some day. We are good friends, save that.

(The marquis opens his mouth to protest.)

Waste not thy words, thou courtier. Thou hatest me, and I hate thee. In my case 't is my gloomy nature, in thine thy wicked aspirations. And each of us doth keep his spectre in his heart.

(The marquis again makes a motion, which is repressed by the king.)

We have a just appreciation each of the other. Each of us hath a dark window in his breast, through which we see each other's evil hearts. I laugh to scorn thy love and thy devotion, thou old traitor. Until the day when thou canst no more gold extract from me, so long as thine own interest, the surest of all bonds, unites us, marquis, I will employ thee to give counsel to me, knowing that thou wilt serve me better, the more depraved thou art. Off with thy mask! and off with mine! I like it better so. In very truth, this insult which no man dares offer me, I, marquis, offer everyone. Surely I can no less than be outspoken, having knaves for witnesses. And if the prince, whom truth like a wild deer doth shun, hath it not in his ear, then shall he have it in his mouth, and thou with thy vile stammering tongue shalt witness bear that I, the king, am frank of speech, and thou, the lackey, liest. Now let us talk.

THE MARQUIS.

But . . .

THE KING.

What a weary burden to be king! To be a young man, full of hasty impulses, of hatred and of turbulence, an active, ardent, effervescent, mocking creature, with a whole hurricane of passions in one's heart; to be a strange, inexplicable mixture of blood and fire and powder and caprice, most like unto a sheaf of thunderbolts; to long to try one's hand at everything, to seize upon and pervert everything; to thirst for the possession of a woman; to hunger for a pleasure; never to look upon a maid, a heart, a tempting prey, a scene of wild confusion, without shuddering with the fierce need of biting at it; to feel one's self from head to foot the man of flesh,

and without respite, in the darkness of a gorgeous hell, to listen palefaced to a voice that says: "Be thou a phantom!" To be not e'en a king! God save the mark! to be a kingdom! To feel a ghastly medley of cities and of states replacing one's will, one's instincts and desires; and towers, walls and provinces involved in endless intricacies in one's bowels; to say as one looks at the map: lo! that is 1! Girona is my heel and Alcala my head! To see ever increasing in one's mind, each day more base and despicable, an appetite that seems a thirst for empire; to feel cold rivers flowing over one; to see wide oceans with their dreary waste of waters isolating one from all mankind; to have the sense of being suffocated 'neath a wave of flame, and to look on, dull-eyed, while the whole world is poured as through a sieve into one's heart! And then, my wife, that monster of inflexibility! I am her slave by day, her galley-slave by night. Omnipotent and melancholy, side by side we sit, alone and friendless in a ray of light—a light that shines but dimly, 't is so high above our heads. We shiver as we touch each other's hands. God places on a barren, tragic eminence, far above Aragon, Algarva, Jaën, Burgos, Leon, and Castile, two insects, masks, formidable nonentities, the king, the queen; she stands for dread and I for terror. Ah! certes it would be pleasant to be king; who can say otherwise? Had not the tyrant tyranny forever on his back! But to be always looking on, to lead a life of feigning, two effigies of pallor and of silence; never to laugh or weep. Urraca lives in her, in me Alonzo's born again. The marble man and the bronze woman! Prone in the dust the peoples worship us; while they do bless us here below, we feel that we're accursed; the incense floats up tremblingly toward us, and in the smoke the idol

Ferdinand and the idol Isabella are hopelessly confused. Our twin thrones mingle their effulgence, we see each other indistinctly at each other's side, and when we speak, the tomb doth ope its door. In sooth, I am not sure that she's not dead. She is a corpse as much as she 's a despot, and I am like to freeze her when our fingers meet upon the sceptre, as if God with a fillet bound her mummy's hand to the hand of a skeleton. And yet I am alive! This pompous phantom is not I, no! no! And so, whene'er I can, from all these grandeurs that do weigh so heavily upon us I escape, I sally forth from out my kingly shell, and, like the dragon that doth rear his head aloft in the bright sun, I feel the marvelous glow of the awakening! Mad as the cyclone, as the howling tempest, I, the gloomy prisoner of the throne, steal forth, distracted with excitement! Freed from my yoke I rush through misery and happiness, my only aim to be an animal; trampling upon my royal cloak, my heart attuned to vice and ribald songs and midnight revelry, and I, the king, the prisoner, the martyr, watching my lust wax greater, and my talons grow; woman and her chastity, the bishop with his cross arouse my anger; I am fierce, frantic, joyous; and the man whose blood is boiling in my veins, flame mixed with slime, takes his revenge for having been a ghost by turning demon!

(Pensively.)

Only to become a shade and phantom once again to-morrow.

(To the marquis.)

The mind of the colossus is impenetrable to the atom, wherefore thon dost not understand how I display myself thus shamelessly before these men; but I do know that one and all, when I lay bare my thoughts, tremble the more, the more I play the cynic, and 't is my keenest joy, as I stand laughing here

amongst them, to make them all the viler by confessing my own hideousness, and as I thus break through all equilibrium, all respect and all restraint, I, who was naught but king, feel a free man! Thou dost not comprehend me, and thy fear grows more intense. 'T is well. To-morrow when thou meetest my cold glance once more, thou 'It quake with fear, doubting thy senses, taking for a dream the drunken frenzy in which I now am plunged before thee—a glowing furnace wherein my past, my lofty rank, my sceptre burn and seethe beneath thine eyes, and whence I shall emerge a lump of ice!

(He again takes his rosary in his hand.)

Now let us conclude our prayers.

GUCHO (aside, looking askance at the king).

Go! pray.

THE KING.

Then will I question yonder monk.

(He begins to tell his beads.)

GUCHO (aside, as he watches him).

What mummery! To such an end will this king come. A merciless impostor, he believes in naught, but,—such is the chaos of his unenlightened soul! when he repeats a pater he becomes an imbecile. He then bows down before the pope and looks with holy awe upon a council. Even while he runs amuck among the priests he fears them; he feels that he 's but dust beneath the feet of yonder haughty saunterer.

(Crossing himself.)

So be it! He's a libertine, a liar and a cheat, deceitful, cruel, obscene, atheistic—and Catholic. And, more's the pity, in the years to come, he'll be known by that name.

(The king replaces his rosary at his belt and motions to the prior to approach.)

THE KING (to the prior).

Come hither.

amongst them, to make them all the viler by (The prior comes forward with his hands folded across his breast, and his eyes cast down.)

If haply frankness should be lacking in thy answers, look to thyself!

(The prior bows.)

Beware. Now tell the truth.

(The prior bows again.)

(A few moments earlier the old monk in the Dominican's frock has reappeared at the back of the stage. He walks along, with eyes cast down, heedless of everything, and occupied solely in saluting all the crosses on the tombs he passes. He seems to be mumbling prayers. The king's attention is attracted by him and he points him out to the prior.)

And first of all, who is you monk with haggard face, dressed not as thou art, who bends his knee before each cross he passes?

THE PRIOR.

He is a madman.

THE KING.

But how pale he is!

THE PRIOR.

He fasts and watches. He wears his strength away. He speaks in a loud voice! He walks in the bright sunlight with bare head. He raves and rambles in his speech. He dreams of going to confront the popes, and telling them their duty on his knees. We should keep silence when he passes by. He is not of our order. In this cloister he is under surveillance. 'T is customary to immure thus in our convents all the restless priests, the learned men, the dreamers who might preach about the country doctrines unpleasing to our church of Spain.

THE KING.

What form of madness hath he?

THE PRIOR.

Visions of flame, hell, Satan. He hath been here but a short while. THE KING.

He is quite old.

THE PRIOR.

Methinks he hath not long to live.

(The monk passes out of sight without noticing anyone.)

GUCHO (aside, contemplating his baubles).

I have two baubles. One of gold; the other copper. One is named Evil and the other Good. And I love both of them alike. I have no aim in life.

(He gazes at the turf upon the graves.)

Here flowers, there dried leaves.

THE KING (to the prior).

The morals of your convents, monk, are much relaxed.

THE PRIOR.

My lord . . .

THE KING.

Women are often seen within these walls.

THE PRIOR.

A convent of the Ursulines is close at hand; they are the sheep of our pasture; we are . . .

THE KING.

Goats tending sheep.

THE PRIOR (bowing).

My lord . . .

GUCHO (aside).

Every male convent acts as confessor to the nearest female convent, commits the sin, and then gives absolution with paternity, and holding sway in its omnipotence over those yielding hearts, deprives them of their virtue, then restores their innocence. A pleasing miracle. Secret of the confessional.

THE PRIOR.

O king, the sons of Levi. Sion's daughters . . .

THE KING.

Mate well together. But I must needs be stern. Be sure that Rome shall know of it.

THE PRIOR (bowing).

My lord . . .

GUCHO (aside).

When at their cloister gate, where Jesus no more reigns, the little pagan god Dan Cupid comes a-knocking, Pope Sixtus, having two daughters by a strumpet, cannot scold if they do set the gate ajar.

THE KING (to the prior).

Rome is prepared to punish and the times seem ripe.

(Gazing fixedly at the prior.)

The Bishop of Seo de Urgel is within your walls; I have been so informed.

(The prior bows.)

And with full power to chastise.

THE PRIOR (with a reverence).

In matters of dogma only, good my lord, and to exterminate or conquer heresies. No more than that.

THE MARQUIS (in an undertone to the king).

Your eyes are famous scouts.

THE KING (in an undertone to the marquis).

I love to see.

(The king's eye is attracted by the yawning opening in the ground a few feet away.)

What is this, monk?

THE PRIOR.

A tomb. An open tomb.

THE KING.

Open!

THE PRIOR.

Yes, king.

THE KING.

For whom?

THE PRIOR.

When a man is to fall, God only knows.

THE KING.

For whom is vonder tomb?

(The prior says nothing. The king persists.)

Speak instantly, I bid thee; answer me!

THE PRIOR.

I cannot say. It doth await an occupant.

(After a pause.)

Perchance it is for me. Or e'en for you.

THE MARQUIS (in the king's ear).

When there 's a feeling in a convent that a monk therein doth rise above the level of the order, whether in evil works or in well-doing, he is suppressed.

THE KING (in an undertone).

In sooth, 't is a wise course to kill him.

THE MARQUIS.

Nay. The church abhorreth blood. Sire, they simply bury him.

THE KING.

I understand.

THE MARQUIS.

This is a lonely spot. Cry out, no one will hear; resist, there are no passers-by.

(Pointing to the hole wherein one can see the beginning of a staircase, and then to the flagstone near by.)

They force the man down step by step, and when he's at the bottom, then they set you stone in place above his head and darkness fills his eyes for evermore; his fellow-men, the woods, the water and the wind and sky are all above that pall. And, living . . .

THE KING.

He is dead. Yes, 't is a simple plan.

THE MARQUIS.

He dies if he so choose. The church has shed no blood.

(The king nods approvingly.)

THE KING (aloud, looking toward the garden of the cloister).

Whate'er this monk may say in that connection, women . . .

THE PRIOR.

Do not come within our walls.

THE KING (to the marquis).

How he doth lie! I see one now!

(He gazes into the garden, and continues.)

And by her side a charming beardless youth, almost a child, bright-eyed and slender . . .

THE PRIOR.

King, she is a princess.

THE KING.

And the youth?

THE PRIOR.

A prince, O king.

THE KING (in an undertone to the marquis).

I have done well to come.

THE PRIOR.

The statute Magnates . . .

(Saluting the king.)

We are the subjects of the Viscount d'Orthez . . .

THE KING.

And mine.

THE PRIOR (resuming).

Permits us to receive a royal highness.

THE KING.

Two it seems. A male and female.

THE PRIOR (bowing in the direction in which the king's finger is pointing).

A countess!

THE MARQUIS (in an undertone to the king).

Like the King of France, who is a bishop elsewhere, Viscount d'Orthez, Dax and Cahors is at the same time clerk and layman, being a prince; and while he 's always fighting over yonder in his province, shouting: "Forward, my gallant veterans! forward, my guards!" he is a cardinal-deacon and abbot of this convent.

THE KING (with a laugh).

A man of war in France and of the church in Spain.

THE MARQUIS (pointing off the stage to the two persons the king has spied).

And if you gallant finds his idol here, 't is he who places these two hearts beside each other midst the flowers and shade to carry out some project of his own.

THE KING (seriously).

Some project? Nay. I see his aim. marriage.

(To the prior.)

How long since came they here?

THE PRIOR.

When they were children.

THE KING (to the marquis).

Then have they grown to manhood and to womanhood here in this cloister's stifling atmosphere?

(To the prior.)

Their names?

THE PRIOR.

The girl is Rosa d'Orthez.

THE KING.

And the youth?

THE PRIOR.

Don Sancho de Salinas.

(The marquis starts. He gazes eagerly in the direction in which the king has espied the pair.)

THE KING (more seriously than ever). She will inherit Orthez, and he, Burgos.

THE PRIOR (with a gesture of assent). His rights extend even to the Tagus.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Sancho de Salinas! Burgos! Can it be?

THE KING (to the prior).

Go on. Yes, this is all contrived in secret. This Sancho is my cousin. But I thought that branch extinct.

THE PRIOR.

Don Sancho is kept here in hiding. He was sent hither to be reared, and by his side was placed the viscount's niece.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

And I believed they were all dead. What a discovery! What thought is this that comes into my mind? This child in hiding here is he, beyond a doubt. I feel my bowels yearn for him. This is most unexpected.

THE KING (to the marquis).

This sequestered convent is well chosen.

THE PRIOR.

The children are betrothed and soon will be made man and wife. They both descend from the same ancestor, a saint whose name we here invoke; his son, Loup Centulle, was Duke of Gascony; then Luke, King of Bigorre, and John, King of Bareges, Viscount Peter, Gascon Fifth . . .

THE KING.

Be brief.

THE PRIOR.

The Viscount-cardinal, who resigns to-day, doth order that, so far as possible, we keep them out of sight in this secluded corner of the cloister.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Sancho!

THE KING (pointing to the young man, who cannot be seen by the audience).

He is a comely stripling. Look!

(The marquis looks, with something like terror, in the direction indicated by the king.)

THE PRIOR (also looking in the same direction).

He is entitled to a guard of fifty hidalgoes commanded by an abbot. When he comes to church he sits in the king's gallery, and Peñacerrada 's his capital. But, as he seems to have been born beneath a fatal shadow, no person save myself, the prior of this monastery, knows that he is a royal prince and heir to a great name. He knows it not himself, and, for the same cause, the viscount's niece, the Infanta Donna Rosa, doth not know that she 's a princess. The viscount stands in dread of someone.

THE KING.

God! even so of me! the king! I well might be indignant at this game.

(To the prior, with his eyes still turned in the same direction.)

They wear gowns made of serge like yours?

THE PRIOR.

They both were consecrated to the Virgin; otherwise we could not keep them at the convent. Furthermore they both have ta'en their vows as novices before the chapter.

THE KING.

He is almost a monk and she almost a nun.

THE PRIOR.

E'en so; but they will have the dispensation ne'er refused to princes, and may marry.

THE KING (to the marquis).

I am the wolf, I find my way into the fold, and I can upset everything.

(Pensively, aside.)

But no. 'Faith, Cardinal Orthez, thou dost do my work for me, thou old gray-bearded devil, who didst cause these angels to be reared together! Children, adore each other with the most tender love. This plot against myself I turn to mine own ends. Let Rosa marry Sancho! Aye, that plays my game. By marrying thy niece to my young cousin, viscount, it is thy purpose to steal Burgos from me with Salinas. Good! I'll give thee a free hand. Our claims are equal, too. I, who, like thyself, am grudging of my worldly goods, promise myself to take Navarre from thee with Orthez. I hold thee through her, and thou hold'st me through him. And so, this marriage may take place. 'T is well. To-day the marriage; to-morrow the attack.

(Looking into the garden.)

Th' Infanta is a lovely child.

(Pensively.)

The surest way to reign triumphantly is to employ in one's own interest, pretending to be half asleep the while, the surreptitious toils your enemy has laid. The plot thus turned aside enters your service; he would have slain you but his arm doth swerve and harmlessly slip by; the stupid dagger strikes the very spot where you would have it, and your murderer becomes your slave.

(Turning toward the garden.)

What are they saying? Let us try to hear.

(He walks toward the back of the stage, and disappears among the trees.)

GUCHO (aside, looking after the king). Spy!

(As soon as the king has left the stage, the marquis beckons imperiously to the prior to come to him.)

SCENE III

THE SAME, except the king: THE MARQUIS and THE PRIOR standing together, apart from the rest, near the front of the stage.

THE MARQUIS.

Priest!

THE PRIOR (approaching him submissively). Your servant.

(He makes a profound reverence.)

THE MARQUIS.

Thou didst not tell the king all that there is to tell.

THE PRIOR.

God is the Lord. The priest may not disclose those things he learns in the confessional.

THE MARQUIS.

Pure fiction! Paul the Second has declared that everything may be disclosed in cases of great gravity. Woe, woe to thee if thou defiest me! The king is but my arm; tell everything to me!

THE PRIOR.

But swear that, if I yield to you, you'll not betray my confidence.

THE MARQUIS.

I swear. Nay, look you, I 'll do more; I 'll give thee a gold hat for thy madonna, worth a hundred marks, and six great silver chandeliers of equal value.

THE PRIOR.

You shall know everything.

(Lowering his voice.)

When you and I were young, monseñor, Donna Sancha of Portugal, that Donna Sancha for whom we pray in our fast days, wife of the King of Burgos, presented him with a male child whom she had had by a young page, Gorvona. The king, holding his wife in high esteem, believed himself the father, and the bastard enjoyed the rights and privileges of legitimacy. He inherited the throne and everything appurtenant thereto, then married and then died, leaving a son, who, as was universally supposed, died suddenly while very young. This supposititious death was an abduction by the cardinal-viscount, who caused the little King Don Sancho to be seized and hid away in this fief of Navarre.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

I guessed as much.

(Looking off the stage while the prior is mumbling his prayers.)

He is my child! the son of my own son! I dare not even yet believe it. I feel something springing into life within me, which I knew not I possessed—a heart. O blessed lightning stroke! O unforeseen and overwhelming shock! I, who have done naught but hate, now love. My son! to be a father makes me delirious with joy. Now 't is worth while to live. O rapture! I have snapped my grinding chain asunder. I have lived for evil, henceforth I will live for good. My sinful conscience wandered like the she-wolf. I believed that everything was lost. And now,

O Heaven! I find it all again! I am a father, and a grandfather! Henceforth I can look upward with a smile to the pure, radiant heights, can cast a furtive glance up at the pinnacle whereon that hily, born of this vile clay, will grow to manhood, and can say: "He is my son!" and live again in him! I'll make the trial. I feel this child with all his radiant youth shine through the mist that shrouds my life, and that his pure young heart hath taken firm possession of my villainous old heart, so that I now have to watch over me a store of innocence within me, which will be my guide and counselor; I am another man, I weep and I adore, and see the sun arise upon my darkness! Mine is that glorious light! mine that untutored youth! O God, mysterious and unknown, art thou in truth a clement God? 1, who have guided this king's footsteps as he trampled on his victims, brightening his gloom and playing the courtier to his crimes, now feel a soft hand lightening the burden of my evil deeds. Ah me! at last I breathe again, I, ghastly burden-bearer that I am, do raise my head, filled with remorse, alas! and look toward heaven and breathe its bracing air! I am no more alone. I live, I love, bewildered by my joy! Alas! as I have none but him, so he hath none but me. What frightful chasms yawn before him! pitfalls without number! Aye, but I watch over him.

(Pensively.)

For him the light, for me the shadow. Let me remain beneath this cloak, which veils my head. The father once surmised, the child is lost.

(He turns again to the prior.)

THE PRIOR.

I have monseñor's oath of secrecy.

THE MARQUIS.

Be not alarmed. When is Don Sancho to go hence?

THE PRIOR.

The child reputed to be dead is now a man. Monseñor the viscount-abbot doth make use of him for his own purposes, and will proclaim him count, prince, royal highness, king, when he hath made of him his niece's husband.

(He casts a glance behind. The king reappears at the back of the stage.)

The king!

THE MARQUIS.

The king!

(Aside, speaking to himself.)

Old man, look well to it that thou concealest from this king the heart that hath so unexpectedly sprung into life within thy breast.

THE PRIOR.

Protect us. God forbid that aught should anger him!

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Come, thou comedian, resume thy dastard's mask, insensible to hatred, insult or affront, and summon back thy fawning smile to thy mendacious brow.

THE PRIOR.

Monseñor hath promised most entire secrecy.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Assuredly 1 have!

(To the prior.)

Fear naught.

SCENE IV

THE SAME: THE KING.

THE KING (aside).

To peer into half-opened hearts is most diverting to me.

(He looks back in the direction whence he came.)
Here they come. Let us be off.

THE MARQUIS.

On what have you, their lord and king, decided?

THE KING.

To make them happy. I propose that they shall marry.

THE MARQUIS.

Subtle policy.

THE KING.

Spain step by step and stone by stone is crumbling away. This marriage serves my purposes. 'T is my intent to lend a hand to Cardinal d'Orthez, to gratify his aspirations, and, marquis, I shall have Dax and Bayonne ere long.

THE MARQUIS (aside.)

Dilate, O my old savage, gloomy heart! My child will be a king!

(At a sign from the king his escort and all his retinue go out through the gap in the wall. The prior approaches the king and bows, his arms crossed upon his breast.)

THE KING (to the prior).

I have not been in this place.

THE PRIOR (bowing).

O king . . .

THE KING.

And thou hast never seen me.

THE PRIOR.

Poor and naked I. The lowly monk . . .

THE KING.

Upon this convent I shall keep an eye.

THE PRIOR.

And you will find your Highness's commands obeyed.

(Aside.)

A curse upon thee, king!

THE KING.

Thy master is in France.

THE PRIOR.

Even so, your Highness.

THE KING.

But the Bishop of Seo de Urgel is your guest.

THE PRIOR.

We have the honor of a visit from a bishop.

THE KING.

He must know nothing of all this.

(Don Sancho and Donna Rosa appear at the back of the stage. They pay no heed to what is taking place. The king calls the marquis's attention to them and then walks toward the breach.)

(To the marquis.)

Come quickly!

(To the prior.)

If 't is thy wish to live, be silent.

(To the marquis.)

Come.

(Exit the king. Gucho follows him.)

THE MARQUIS (gazing at Don Sancho).

How beautiful he is! My darling boy!

(Exit.)

SCENE V

DON SANCHO, DONNA ROSA.

(Don Sancho and Donna Rosa, both in the garb of novices, he with the white frock, she with the white veil, run back and forth and play among the frees. She is sixteen and he seventeen. They chase each other and play at hide and seek, joyons and laughing. Rosa tries to catch butterflies. Sancho plucks flowers. He makes up a nosegay and holds it in his hand.)

DONNA ROSA.

Come this way. See, the air is filled with butterflies.

DON SANCHO.

I love the roses quite as well.

(He gathers some eglantine, adds it to his nosegay and looks about.)

Oh! I am wild with joy to see so many lovely things!

DONNA ROSA (gazing admiringly at a butterfly).

See this one flying among the rushes!

DON SANCHO.

All is life and perfume!

DONNA ROSA.

Let us divide our treasures. For you the flowers, for me the butterflies.

DON SANCHO (looking upward).

Something immeasurably sweet and pleasant is taking place above us.

(He plucks flowers for his nosegay while Donna Rosa runs after the butterflies. He gazes at her.)

Rosa!

DONNA ROSA (turning and looking at the flowers Sancho holds in his hand).

Señor, for whom is your bouquet?

DON SANCHO.

Guess.

DONNA ROSA.

'T is for me.

(She returns to the butterflies and tries to catch them. They elude her, and she grows angry. She speaks to them.)

I think you pretty, and you fly from me! Why do you so?

DON SANCHO.

They lose their color, Rosa, if thou touchest them.

(Musing, as he watches the butterflies.)

One seems to see sweet kisses wandering about in search of lips.

DONNA ROSA.

They find them. They 're the flowers.

DON SANCHO.

Then, Rosa, since you are a flower!

(He takes her in his arms. She struggles, but he kisses her.)

DONNA ROSA.

Señor, that 's very naughty of you.

DON SANCHO.

But we 're to be married.

(Donna Rosa looks after a butterfly. She keeps her eye upon it. It lights upon a flower.)

DONNA ROSA.

It lights. Let 's catch it.

(She steals softly toward it.)

(To Don Sancho.)

Come.

DON SANCHO (following her very close).

Hush!

(Don Sancho's lips meet Donna Rosa's, and the butterfly flies away.)

DONNA ROSA.

Ah! silly boy! thou couldst not catch the butterfly!

DON SANCHO.

No, but I caught the kiss.

DONNA ROSA (gazing at the butterflies as they fly back to the flowers).

See how they come and lay their homage at their lady's feet! Ah! now they fly away, the faithless little fellows!

(She follows their flight.)

Why, I prithee, do they fly so far, so high! what lovely wings!

(Don Sancho creeps gently up behind and kisses her. She pushes him away.)

A kiss before we 're married! Never! I'll not have it.

DON SANCHO.

Then give it back to me.

DONNA ROSA (smiling).

No.

DON SANCHO.

Yes.

DONNA ROSA.

But-I do love thee!

(They embrace. They sit down side by side upon a tomb. She lays her head upon his shoulder. Both, as if in a trance, dreamily follow the butterflies with their eyes.)

DON SANCHO.

Oh! how vast and sweet is Nature! Let me explain to thee. In winter the dull sky lets fall upon the earth a cold, white shroud; but, when comes April once again, the flowers are born, the days grow longer; then the happy earth sends back to the bright sky which shelters it, its flakes of snow in guise of snowwhite butterflies; mourning is laid aside for

festal garb, and all the broad expanse of space is azure blue, and joy flies upward tremblingly to God. Thence comes this whirl of wings from out the darkness. 'Neath the boundless sky, God opens hearts innumerable, and fills them all with ecstasy and radiance. And none says nay to him and none denies him. For all he does is good!

DONNA ROSA.

Ah well! I love thee.

DON SANCHO (excitedly).

Rosa!

(He strains her to his breast. A butterfly passes.

Donna Rosa extricates herself from his embrace, and
runs after it.)

Oh! how beautiful he is! Come! let us catch him! Come!

DON SANCHO.

God sows the charms of spring to charm thine eyes.

(The butterfly lights upon a bush.)

DONNA ROSA (putting forth her hand to seize it).

Let 's make no noise.

(The butterfly flies away.)

How tiresome! He 's flown away. (She follows the butterfly. Don Sancho follows her.)

He 's in the lily now.

(The butterfly flies still farther away.)

Good, in the clematis.

DON SANCHO.

Our hearts have always lived, since we were little children, side by side. My wife!

(The butterfly flies farther on.)

DONNA ROSA.

He sees me!

(The butterfly lights upon the eglantine. She tries to catch it and puts out her hand, then quickly draws it back again.)

Ah! the naughty rosebush pricked my fingers!

DON SANCHO.

Those roses! they would drink the blood of angels!

(The monk dressed as a Dominican appears under the trees among the tombs. He does not see them, but Donna Rosa espies him)

DONNA ROSA.

Oh! there 's the old monk who acts so strangely. That man terrifies me. Let us go.

(They go out in the direction of the clumps of trees.

The monk comes slowly torward as if oblivious of everything. Night is beginning to (ill.)

SCENE VI

THE MONK (alone).

On one side the earth, sin-laden home of man,-princes all reeking with abominable crimes, unlearned learned men and unwise wise men, lust and pride and frantic blasphemy, Sennacherib the murderer and lying Delilah, heretics, Waldenses, Jews, Mozarabians and Zoroastrians, and pale-faced delvers into algebraic ciphers,-all, great and small alike, defiling the baptismal symbol, groping here and there, denying Jesus, doing evil,all, pope, bishop, minister and king: and, on the other side, the immeasurable, awful flame! Here man, forgetting, living, eating, sleeping,—there the awesome depths of the vast seething pit of hell! O thou abandoned human creature! O twofold basis of our dreary destiny! Life, death. To laugh for one brief hour and never weep! Vision of hell! Deep caves and lofty mountain-tops; live embers in the depths and burning sulphur on the summits. Crater with a thousand mouths! the yawning outlet of the fiery gulf! Beneath the infinite avenger, the poor wretch doomed to infinite perdition! Joy is one half, mourning the other half. The fire burns. I hear loud shrieks: "My son! my mother! mercy!"-and I see a vain chimera, hope, reduced to ashes. Eyes and faces vanish, then return, haggard to look upon in the deep chafing-dish; upon the living skulls the melted lead falls, drop by drop. A spectre world. It tortures and it suffers torture; its vault is that which lies beneath the grewsome cemeteries, studded with fiery specks as are the heavens at night,—a hideous ceiling, pierced with graves without regard to order, whence a never-ending shower of souls pours into the abyss, and there they writhe in agony, beyond God's pardon, amid the burning coals. Darkness, and sobbing. A mournful wind comes sighing through the openings and fans the flames that ceaselessly do intertwine their fiery tongues in fierce embrace; the red-hot, gushing lava fills the hollow porticoes; and heaven never speaks! And hell speaks And everyone who, upon earth, through vice or sloth, hath used his time unprofitably, hath taken a false step in the excitement of delirium, hath gone astray, faltered or sinned, whoever hath, though for an instant only, wavered in well-doing, is there! Nemesis! Fathomless abyss! To doubt it is impossible. What have we here before our eyes? Hell visible. Its pestilential breath assails our nostrils. Belial's hearthstone rears aloft its ghastly chimney, with its acrid, ruddy vapors of the vat, into our atmosphere. Vesuvius, Cheerless Stromboli. And Ætna. Hecla in the north. If not of this, of what is one to think? We have this mystery confronting us, yawning beneath our feet, and spitting flame and death and darkness. We may lean over if we will and look within. At night we can espy the damned, the burning, rolling about in vortices like showers of sparks, flying and falling back, their wings scorched by the flames. Alas! no means of exit, no Return. Back to your dungeons escape. walled with red-hot coals. Once more become the billows of the horrible chaotic sea of flame. Above you Satan laughs, monster of infamy! They writhe and squirm, fearful to look upon, gnawed at on every side, live brands, a ghastly mass of flame and smoke, scattered throughout the cheerless vast expanse. The fiery serpents lick their shapeless hands; the oil doth eat them, the lead drinks their blood, the boiling pitch dissolves their flesh; their eyes are absolutely and forever blind; and in their endless raving, through all the gaping holes that make their bodies veritable sieves, are heard but these two awe-inspiring words: "Never! Forever!" My God! who will have pity? 1! I come to save mankind. Aye, amnestied mankind; the idea fills my soul. Within me love sublime is crying to be heard, and I will set abyss against abyss. Dominic conceived the plan, and I will execute it. Hell! How to hurl down that lid of iron? How, O Rome, O Jesus, on that awful slope to stay the fall of man? I have found the way. Indeed Saint Paul did point it out. The eagle-therein lies his proud enjoyment of his lofty flight—sees everything; his eyes are dazzled by the things that he describes. What must we have that hell's gates may be closed, and heaven's open thrown? The stake. Hell must be cauterized; eternity be won by telling means. One gleam of pain annuls innumerable torments. The burning earth will quench the sombre fires of hell. Hell for one hour on earth destroys the power of an everlasting conflagration. Sin is consumed with the vile carnal rag, and from the flame the soul emerges, pure and radiant, for water

laves the body, fire the soul. The body is but dust, the soul is light; and fire, which follows the celestial chariot and twines its arms around the axle-tree, alone can purify the soul, being of the same essence as itself. To thee I 'll sacrifice the body, O immortal soul! What father would an instant hesitate? What mother seeing her poor child suspended 'twixt the consecrated pyre and the awful flames of hell, would not accept the exchange that doth exterminate a demon, recreate an angel? Yes, that is the true meaning of the word Redemption. Immortal Zion, deathless Gomorrha, no one can transfer one ray of joy from her who shines refulgent in the heavens to her who burns in hell; but God permits us to redeem the future! No more legions of the damned! the torch divine comes forth to bless. But time is short! Alas! the evil in the world grows worse; a second time the bleeding Christ is dying; all is wickedness and crime, and everything is crumbling to ruin. From hour to hour the deadly tree of sin puts forth a branch, which God draws upward to himself, but Eve, alas! doth bend it till it reach the lips of man! Faith is no more! Backsliding Jews, monks faithless to their vows, Franciscan mendicants, nuns who allow their hair to grow-this one tears down a cross, that one defiles the host. Faith dies, by error strangled, as the lily by the nettle. The pope is on his knees. To whom? To God? Not so. To man. He bends the knee to Cæsar. Rome, ere long, subject to earthly kings, will be the handmaiden of Nineveh. One step more and the world is lost. But I have come and here am I. 1 bring with me a fervent faith. With thoughtful brow I come, to fan the saving fire of the stake. O earth, I come to redeem the human soul by human flesh. 1 bring salvation and the healing balm. Glory to God! to all men

joy! The heart, the hard and stony heart will melt. I will encompass the whole world with funeral pyres, my lips will utter the deep cry of Genesis: "Let there be light!" and straight the blazing furnace will shine forth! I will sow flames and firebrands and burning coals, and gleams of light, and everywhere, above earth's greatest cities, I will kindle the supreme *auto-da-fé*, celestial, joyous, living! O mankind, I love thee!

(11e raises his eyes heavenward, with clasped hands and lips parted, in an ecstasy of contemplation. Behind him, from the outskirts of a sort of thicket at the farther end of the cemetery, emerges a monk, with his arms crossed upon his breast and his hood pulled down over his face. Then from another part

of the thicket, another monk, and then another. These monks, who wear the typical garb of Augustinians, take their places in silence some little distance behind the Dominican, who does not see them. Other monks come forth one after another in the same way, in silence, and take their places beside the first comers. All have their arms crossed upon their breasts, and their hoods lowered. No face can be seen. In a short time a semicircle is formed behind the Dominican. The semicircle parts in the middle, and a bishop between two archdeacons comes out from behind the trees, with his cope over his shoulders, crozier in hand and mitre on his head. It is the Bishop of Seo de Urgel. He walks slowly forward followed by the prior, who, alone of all the monks, has his hood raised. The bishop, without speaking, takes his stand in the centre of the semicircle of monks, which closes behind him. The Dominican has seen nothing of what has taken place. It grows darker and darker.)

SCENE VII

THE DOMINICAN, THE BISHOP OF SEO DE URGEL, THE PRIOR, MONKS.

THE BISHOP.

Be ye my witnesses that I, John, Bishop of Seo de Urgel, am now about to sit in judgment on this man before us, good or bad be he, and first of all to question him; for the law gives us license to chastise, but orders that we first give warning to the culprit.

(The monk has turned about. He gravely looks from one to another of the assemblage. He does not seem to be disturbed. He looks at the bishop.)

Who art thou?

THE MONK.

A friar of the order of Dominic.

THE BISHOP.

Thy name?

THE MONK.

Torquemada.

THE BISHOP.

'T is said that in thy infancy the devil did possess thee, and that thou art beset by visions of disaster. Is it true?

THE MONK.

Before my eyes the real presence becomes a living truth.

THE BISHOP.

Moonshine!

THE MONK.

Content yourself with saying 't is a vision. I see God.

(Fixing his eyes upon the mystic golden triangle at the top of the tall cross.)

O Lord, what wouldst thou that we priests should do in face of thy eternal radiance?

To see the law, simple and awe-inspiring, and to see naught beside, is ferrible to think upon. But what am I to do?

THE BISHOP.

'T is said—do you make answer—that in thy view we learned doctors err in that we do abhor the impious man as we abhor wild beasts.

THE MONK.

In truth, lord bishop, you do err therein.

THE BISHOP.

Earthworm!

THE MONK.

The impious man we needs must love and save.

THE BISHOP.

'T is said that thou art lured by a false dogma that led the Lombard Didier astray, and that, according to thy dreams or thy false principles, hell's fire is scattered and extinguished by the stake; so that the flame sends dead men's souls to heaven, and that to save the soul the body must be burned.

THE MONK.

Such is the truth.

THE BISHOP.

A grievous error doth possess thy mind. Sin, that pernicious tree, hath error for its root.

THE MONK.

The soul loathes contact with the body, wretched man. To burn, that is to purify.

THE BISHOP.

A frightful doctrine.

THE MONK.

Nay.

THE BISHOP.

And false.

THE MONK.

'T is true. And I propose to make my acts conform thereto.

THE BISHOP.

Viper!

THE MONK.

I so believe.

THE BISHOP.

If thou dost not retract, beware! I do enjoin thee to repent, and to renounce thy false belief.

THE MONK.

Humble I am, nor can I lie, and I will not retract.

THE BISHOP.

Perversity!

THE MONK.

The Council of the Lateran is on my side, and Innocent the Third.

THE BISHOP.

If thou art docile, thou mayest claim whate'er thou wilt, but, as a rebel, naught. Thine error may give forth a baleful light, my son, a schism may result therefrom. So beat thy breast and say: "I am at fault."

THE MONK.

Nay, I am right.

THE BISHOP.

Renounce thy doctrine. Bruno of Angers, seeking to be great, repented.

THE MONK.

I seek not to be great, but to remain the humble creature that I am.

THE BISHOP.

Proud man!

THE MONK.

Nay, but a true believer.

THE BISHOP.

What is thy purpose?

THE MONK.

I shall go to Rome, barefooted, to give warning to the Holy Father.

THE BISHOP.

He it was who ordered me to try thee, dog!

THE MONK.

The barking of the dog awakes the shepherd. I will awake the pope. He can but listen to me.

THE BISHOP (to the monks, pointing to the Dominican).

This man, my sons, is fierce as any tiger.

THE MONK.

Aye, because his heart is tender. What says Saint Paul? "Faith burns by charity."

THE BISHOP.

Thou dost pervert the meaning of a text inopportunely quoted. Pope Sixtus Fourth, a pope whom the whole world reveres, would have the altar less inexorable and the faith less stern. Indulgence is in him akin to sanctity. It is his purpose to arm truth with gentleness. The inquisition tends to milder methods. When the pope doth raise his hand, it is to bless far more than to chastise. One rarely sees to-day a smoking pyre.

THE MONK.

I am appalled by such misrule. The flames of hell wax fiercer and soar higher as the flames sink around the stake.

THE BISHOP.

Poor darkened soul! What is thy purpose, pray?

THE MONK.

To save the world.

THE BISHOP.

And how?

THE MONK.

By fire.

THE BISHOP.

Beware that ill-timed remedy.

THE MONK.

The doctor's not the master of the remedy.

THE BISHOP.

But tell me, pray, what thou hopest?

THE MONK.

To triumph with God's help.

THE BISHOP.

Ah! we shall see.

(He points to the opening in the ground.)

Go in.

THE MONK.

What is this cave?

THE BISHOP.

The tomb.

THE MONK.

'T is well.

(He walks toward the hole.)

THE BISHOP.

Stay. Still there is time.

THE MONK (walking toward the hole).

Introïbo.

THE BISHOP.

Reflect.

THE MONK (with his eyes fixed on the sky).

O God, smite thou thy priest and prophet, and may thy blessed will be done.

(He pauses on the brink of the opening.)

THE EISHOP.

Thou owest obedience to thy bishop. A head that holds itself erect within the cloister walls is an affront. The church is bound in

duty to consign the man who doth disturb her peace to everlasting night.

 $\Gamma H \to M \Theta N K$ (standing on the brink of the opening).

Amen.

THE BISHOP.

Obey. I call upon thee to obey.

THE MONK.

I will not.

THE BISHOP.

Descend one step.

(The monk puts his foot into the opening and descends the first step.)

In the name of Christ, recant.

THE MONK.

I will not.

THE BISHOP.

Down.

(The monk descends the second step.)

Abjure.

THE MONK.

I will not.

THE BISHOP.

Down.

(The monk descends the third step.)

I am thy bishop and thy judge. Retract thy false and barbarous doctrine.

THE MONK.

'T is the true doctrine.

THE BISHOP.

Vield to me.

THE MONK.

I will not.

THE BISHOP.

Down.

(The monk descends. His body from his waist down is hidden. The bishop steps toward him and draws near the opening. He calls the monk's attention to the contents of the tomb.)

Thou seest you jug of water and you loaf of barley bread. The curtain between thee and the bright light of day is to be drawn forever. Everything, the stars, the dawn, will vanish from thy sight.

THE MONK.

So be it.

THE BISHOP.

Down.

(The monk descends. Only his head is above the ground.)

Think once again. Herein thy life, without a breath of air, will go out like a torch. Hunger and thirst. 'T is horrible to die.

THE MONK.

'T is beautiful.

THE BISHOP.

Down.

(The monk disappears in the hole.)

THE MONK'S VOICE.

I am at the bottom.

THE BISHOP.

Put the stone in place above him.

THE MONK'S VOICE.

Do so.

(At a sign from the bishop two monks push the flagstone over the opening. Just before it is entirely closed they pause, leaving a narrow aperture. The bishop leans over the aperture.)

THE BISHOP.

By Jesus Christ! by Saint Peter's ring! A moment hence 't will be too late. Darkness awaits thee. Dost thou not retract?

THE MONK'S VOICE.

No.

THE BISHOP.

Thou hast but a moment more. Renounce thy mad and headstrong fallacies. Recant.

THE MONK'S VOICE.

I will not.

THE BISHOP.

Then go in peace!

(The two monks push the flagstone in place, and the sepulchre is closed.)

My brethren, let us pray.

(The monks all clasp their hands. They form in procession, two by two, and march slowly off the stage, the bishop bringing up the rear. They disappear among the trees. They can be heard chanting prayers for the dead. Their voices grow fainter and fainter.)

VOICES OF THE MONKS (in the distance).

De profundis ad te clamavi Domine.

THE VOICE (in the tomb).

Have pity, Lord, upon this wretched world!

VOICES OF THE MONKS.

Libera nos.

THE VOICE (in the tomb).

My God, deliver me!

(Enter Don Sancho and Donna Rosa.)

SCENE VIII

THE MONK in the tomb, DON SANCHO, DONNA ROSA.

(Don Sancho and Donna Rosa come out from the thicket, and stop under the last trees. They look at each other and at the solitude about them. A momentary silence. It is almost dark.)

DON SANCHO.

Our hearts are one, for we have loved since we were children, and my hand seeks thine; I cannot say if I do draw thee after me, or if I follow thee. Rosa, our lives are wrapped in mystery. Sometimes I dream about it. Here, in this convent, we have been brought up together. Knowest thou who we are? Why are we thus confined? But I care not, so long as I may love thee. I am the knight and thou the lady. Why I speak to thee about my heart, I cannot say; my heart 's thy breath, the fiery breath of heaven; it issues from thy mouth and glistens in thine eyes. I have no heart when thou 'rt not by my side. Thy veil is in the way. A kiss.

DÖNNA ROSA.

No.

(She lets him take it, then leans on his arm and points to the sky.)

See that star.

(They both gaze at the sky in rapture.)

THE VOICE (in the tomb).

O Lord! have mercy on this earth!

VOICES OF THE MONKS (in the distance).

Ite, pax sepulcris!

THE VOICE (in the tomb).

Mercy!

DONNA ROSA.

Hearest thou singing?

DON SANCHO.

No, but I hear cries.

VOICES OF THE MONKS.

(They grow fainter and fainter in the distance.)

Onus grave super caput.

DONNA ROSA.

Hark, they are singing. Night is more solemn with voices singing in the darkness. The chant is the joy-offering to Heaven above. All earthly creatures love. Let us love.

VOICES OF THE MONKS.

Miserere!

THE VOICE (in the tomb).

Miserere !

DON SANCHO.

No. 'T is a cry. Some one is calling. I was right. Whence comes the cry?

DONNA ROSA.

'T is from the chapel. 'T is the evening hymn.

DON SANCHO.

Not so.

DONNA ROSA.

The darkness and the evening mist deceive one.

THE VOICE (in the tomb).

Tesus!

DON SANCHO (spying the stone that covers the tomb).

'T is there!

DONNA ROSA.

I am afraid.

DON SANCHO.

Some one is underneath!

DONNA ROSA.

A dead man speaks!

THE VOICE (in the tomb).

O God! O Father!

DON SANCHO.

'Neath that stone a living man is buried.

DONNA ROSA.

Go not near. A ghost, a ghastly face, a dead man will come up, I tell you!

DON SANCHO (almost roughly).

Help me!

(He kneels and tries to move the stone. She kneels beside him and also tries to raise it. He turns to her with a smile.)

If 't is some poor wretch condemned to die, let him receive his pardon at thy hands!

(He leans over the stone.)

Is 't here that some one speaks?

THE VOICE (in the tomb).

Is some one passing? Help!

DON SANCHO.

Patience.

(They unite in an effort to raise the flagstone.)

Nothing we do will swerve or move this stone. Oh! for a crow-bar!

(ile spies the iron cross on a tomb near the wall close by.)

Ah! that cross!

(He rises and walks toward the cross.)

DONNA ROSA (detaining him).

Beware!

DON SANCHO (gazing at the tomb).

Poor man!

DONNA ROSA.

I fear to see thee touch that cross, a holy thing.

DON SANCHO.

'T will be more holy having saved a life. I take it down and Jesus smiles approvingly upon me.

(He uproots the iron cross.)

DONNA ROSA (crossing herself).

O crux, ave!

DON SANCHO (examining the cross in his hands).

A solid iron bar. Now, for a stone.

(He rolls a block of stone close up to the tomb and uses it for a fulcrum for his crow-bar. He inserts the end of the shaft of the cross under the stone, and both together seek to pry it up.)

Ah! death is loth to have his eyes reopened. 'T is a hard task.

(They pause to take breath.)

A convent's a strange place. Dark deeds are sometimes done in convents.

DONNA ROSA.

God! I tremble.

DON SANCHO (bearing his weight upon the crow-bar).

'T is a very heavy stone.

DONNA ROSA.

It yields. It moves aside.

(The stone begins to move.)

DON SANCHO.

Once more. Help me a little.

(Rosa presses down upon the crow-bar. Sancho pushes the stone. The tomb is opened.)

DONNA ROSA (clapping her hands).

Good!

DON SANCHO (peering into the dark hole).

Oh! what a fearful cave, filled with dense vapor!

(The monk slowly emerges from the opening. He looks intently at Don Sancho and Donna Rosa.)

DONNA ROSA.

A living man! Why 't is that same old monk! How fortunate that we were by to hear!

THE MONK.

You saved my life. I swear, my children, to repay you.



ACT SECOND

THE THREE PRIESTS

Italy.

The summit of a mountain. A hermit's cave. In the background the entrance, looking out into space. On the ground, in a corner, a straw pallet. In the opposite corner a low altar, whereon is a human skull. In a hollow in the rocky wall is a jug of water, some black bread and a wooden plate on which are apples and chestnuts. Stones for seats and a larger one for a table.

Horizon of forests, mountain-sides intersected by ravines, and precipices. In the distance a mountain torrent. In the mist the hell-tower of a monastery.

SCENE I

FRANCIS DE PAUL (alone).

(He is on his knees praying. He breaks off and rises. He listens. Without, a medley of horns and trumpets and barking dogs is heard.)

What do I hear? I must mistake. It is the bell.

(He listens.)

No, 't is the horn. The horn resounding from rock to rock!

(He listens.)

Sometimes the torrent seems a multitude of voices, broken by the wind and mingled with the noises of the woods.

(He listens.)

No. 'T is the hunt.

(He looks without.)

Before the hunting pack, the blare of trumpets and the tally-ho, the mystery-haunted wood takes fright, and man becomes a demon to the hunted beast.

(He listens. The sound of the hunt becomes more and more distinct.)

'T is a burning shame! Since Simon and Dorothea, the hermit with the wolf hath shared

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his den in this blessed solitude, the Holy Father's consecrate demesne; beneath the brotherhood of the thick branches, love doth reign, and man and nature are at peace. No mortal, be he prince or king, hath right, this cloud-capped mountain being subject to the Roman tiara, to bring dogs, horns and loud outcries to this primeval forest.

(The barking recedes. The noise of the hunt goes and comes, ceases and begins anew.)

The pope alone might do it. Nor can he, for he hunts naught but souls. No, even the most infamous of sacrilegists would not come to shed blood in this holy place, and terrify the birds of heaven, who are God's. And yet some one doth venture; who is this rash mortal? (An aged monk, staff in hand, his feet covered with dust, appears at the entrance of the cave. He wears the cape of a pilgrim over his Dominican's frock. It is Torquemada. He stops in the entrance. His beard is gray, Francis de Paul's white.)

SCENE II

FRANCIS DE PAUL, TORQUEMADA.

TORQUEMADA.

Hail to thee, old man and father!

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

Brother, hail.

TORQUEMADA.

Dost thou permit me to abide a moment here for rest?

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

Enter, my brother.

TORQUEMADA.

I am scorched and chilled; the fever and the burning sun devour me; I journey, and I come, an humble passer-by, beneath thy roof, O holy patriarch, I am o'erspent. I say: Lama Sabacthani! Hail! Blessed be thou, O priest.

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

My blessing on you, friend.

TORQUEMADA.

I, also, am a priest.

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

And may God guide your steps! 'T is well. It is your right to say or not to say whence you have come and whither you are going, for all steps come from the dawn, and all are going on to death. What you are, stranger, that we also are. My son, the infinite doth weigh alike on all mankind, and the same journey is by every mortal taken. Our feet are in the tomb, our knees are at the altar.

TORQUEMADA.

I come from the whole Universe, I go to the one City. I am on my way to Rome.

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

To Rome?

TOROUEMADA.

Aye, base and lowly creature that I am, I have my task allotted and the time has come. At hazard I set out, barefooted; I have journeyed on through sand and snow. My supplication has already reached the Holy See, for I know Alexander Sixth.

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

How now! the newly chosen pope?

TORQUEMADA.

He is a Spaniard like myself. We knew each other at Valentia. His name is Borgia. But who art thou, priest of this unhewn chapel, thou venerable man whom God hath led into this solitude? Thy name?

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

Francis de Paul. And yours?

TORQUEMADA.

Torquemada.

(He steps back with respect.)

Francis de Paul! a saint.

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

Not so.

TORQUEMADA.

Thou utterest oracles!

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

Not so.

TORQUEMADA.

But thou dost miracles perform, my father, so 't is said.

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

I see them. Every morn the dawn doth turn the running waters silver-white, the great sun rises for the little birds, the universal table for the hungry is set forth in field and forest, and life fills the darkness, and the flowers open, and the vast blue sky is glorious to behold; but 't is not I who do these things, but God.

TORQUEMADA.

My father, Jesus brings us face to face, and I, the seer, would speak with thee, the apostle; listen. Hast thou not sometimes thought upon the pope, him of the tiara, that whited sepulchre, and hast thou not said in thine own heart that maybap some unknown and humble pilgrim is, in contrast to the false pontiff, the true priest, and that, though he remain, from sense of duty, prostrate at the feet of Christ's proud vicar raised to the throne by chance, this thoughtful stranger bears within his breast the true heart of the Church, of which the other wears the paltry diadem? What wouldst thou say if this heaven-sent unknown, this leader of the faith, were I?

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

The pope, God's man, doth reign. There are not two Romes.

TORQUEMADA.

No one is God's man if he be not mankind's man first of all. That man am I. Hell and its everlasting gloom await the world. I am the bloody-handed healer. With calm face, he saves mankind, and seems a terrible oppressor. An awe-inspiring form I throw myself into the work that pity doth enjoin upon me,—pity in fearful guise, but true and efficacious; love is the abyss wherein I plunge.

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

I do not understand you. Let us pray.

(He kneels before the altar.)

TORQUEMADA.

One day, 't was long ago, when I was young, and had but for a brief space worn this frock, I saw,—'t was at Segovia in the Holy Cross,—a globe whereon was drawn the world with all the states; rivers and forests; the whole earth; a mass of empires, provinces and cities; snow-capped mountains, islanddotted oceans; all the boundless depths wherein the vast, swarming human race moves to and fro tumultuously in the darkness. Father, thou knowest that there is no emperor, idolater or Christian, who holds not in his hand a globe; and I have had that vision, the whole universe, beneath my eyes; each nation and each zone; Europe and Africa; the Indies, where the dawn is born; I said: "I must become the master." And I said: "I must acquire dominion over all that vast expanse for Jesus, who hath often called me in my dreams. Earth I must take and give it back to Heaven." Yes, father, the terrestrial sphere, with all its kingdoms, all its wars and conflicts, turbulence and terror and confusion, is my globe,—now dost thou understand?

FRANCIS DE PAUL (rising and placing a finger on the skull).

This is my sphere. This relic of a ship-wrecked, foundered destiny; the contemplation of this riddle; the shadow that eternity projects upon this pensive thing of naught; this skull protruding from the human maëlstrom like a reef; these teeth, which still retain their smile, as in their infancy, after the eye has

lost its light; this frightful mask which we all have beneath our brows; this insect that knows what we do not know; this fragment with full knowledge touching the unknown end; to feel my soul laid bare beneath that stony glance, to think, dream and grow old, live less and less, with those two black, unchanging holes for witnesses of my decay,—to pray, and contemplate this nothingness, this dust, this silence, listening in the shadow to my prayer—'t is all I have; and 't is enough.

TORQUEMADA (aside).

A light breaks in upon my mind while listening to him. Many years ago did Constantine, who was well worthy of the throne, see the *labarum* in the air.

(Looking toward the skull.)

And I now see this sign! And by it I will conquer, as did Constantine. This holy hermit points out to my dazzled eyes the other form of truth, the other light of Christianity. Yes, I will keep my sphere and take his from him! so that the reef may indicate the harbor, and life have death for oriflamme!

(To Francis de Paul.)

Hark ye. Dominic did not well understand the sacred flame. It is sublime unless it be inglorious. Dominic would punish, I would save. The flames about the stake are quenched, I will rekindle them. Now dost thou understand?

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

I do.

TORQUEMADA.

It is my aim to kindle upon earth the vast and salutary conflagration. Father, no better thing than this was ever dreamed of. In my darkness I hear Jesus say to me: "Go on! go on! the end thou aim'st at will absolve thee if thou dost attain it!" I go on!

(Francis de Paul places the bread, the wooden platter and the jug of water on the large stone which he uses for a table.)

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

Here are cold water, bread and chestnuts. Drink till your thirst be quenched, and cat your fill. As for your schemes, whereof I see the end, before the flames arise from your first funeral pyre, I will pray God for you, that he may strike you down; for better far for you and the whole human race, would your death be, my son, than such a step on such a road!

TORQUEMADA (aside).

O pitiful enfeebling of a mind in solitude! This poor saint hath not understood.

FRANCIS DE PAUL.

Man is on earth to love his fellow creatures. He is the brother and the friend. If he kill one poor ant he should know why. God of the human mind hath made a wing outspread over creation, and man may not proscribe one living thing, 'mongst the green branches, in the grass, or in the sea or air. To man freedom to work, the tree-top to the bird, and peace to all. No chains. No cage. If man's an executioner, God is but a tyrant. The Gospel hath the cross, the Alkoran the sword. Let us resolve all evil, all mourning, and all gloom into rich blessings for this wretched earth. Who smites may err. So let us never smite. My son, the scaffold is a formidable challenge. Let us leave death to God. Have recourse to the tomb? What insolent audacity! The child, the dove, the flower, the fruit, the woman-everything is sacred, everything is blessed; and when by day and night, musing, I pour forth from the mountain-top my prayers into the vast expanse below, I feel the consciousness of this infinity of love stirring within my breast. The pope is pope, we must revere him. Ah! my son, always to hope and always to forgive, to smite not, to pronounce no sentence, to repent if one commits a sin, to pray, to worship and have faithsuch is the law. 'T is my law. He is saved who keeps it.

TORQUEMADA.

Thyself alone thou savest! But, old man, what of the others? Ah! father, the unending fall of souls, by night and day, at every instant, into hell, the fatal pit of hell, the black, immeasurable pit! and into endless flame and horror! Thou dost save thyself, ah, yes! But what, I prithee, dost thou with thy fellow men? Thou livest peacefully, eating thy walnuts and thy apples, like Anselm or Pacomo in the Libyan desert, and the world should be content with that! and all is well! and nothing is to be deplored! Hell, darkness, souls of the accursed, what are all these, provided thou art left to meditate in peace, alone, with thy straw pallet and thy jug of water! But 't is living like a child and not like an old, gray-haired man! Thou hast not in thine heart, as the Creator hath, a father's love, formidable and sacred! And is the human family of no account? Why one bestows some care upon his ox! one physics a sick dog! And mankind is in danger! Hast thou then no bowels of compassion? Thou livest here beneath the sky as if thou wert between four walls. Dost thou not feel that thou art bound by ties innumerable to execrable, blasphemous, repulsive man, who drags behind him everywhere he goes, in cavern depths, on mountain tops, his misery, which

sheds his crimes along the way? No one of all these widespread evils touches thee! What! when thou seest living men pass by, thou dost not feel that by thy soul thou art akin to all these ghastly phantoms? Ah! thou dost fold thy hands! thou chantest psalms! thou goest and comest from the altar to the cross, from yonder block of stone to yonder bit of wood! 'T is isolation! Now, when everything is falling, crumbling, perishing, duty is manifold, old man! Duty in numberless, implacable, unpleasant forms is like a black and shapeless swarm of insects in the conscience! Duty tears you from the cloister, from the solitude, and cries to you: "Help! think of the helpless multitudes! think of the human race! slumber no more! be up and doing! Heaven! those little children to be burned forever! All these men and women, young and old, to be hurled down among the howling Sodoms! Run! save these souls accursed, and drive them back by force to Paradise! Old man, for that are we upon the earth. Thy law is light; my law is mystery. Thou 'rt naught but hope, I am salvation. I lend a helping hand to God."

(Some moments earlier a man has appeared at the entrance of the cave. He also is old and gray-hearded. He has a boar spear in his hand and at his neck a cross with three branches. He is dressed in a hunting suit of gold brocade, and a tall cap of gold with three circles of pearls. He has a horn at his belt. He has heard Francis de Paul's last words and all of Torquemada's. He bursts out laughing. Francis de Paul and Torquemada turn.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: THE HUNTER.

THE HUNTER.

By my faith, my sons, all my musicians would not afford me more diversion than you do. I listened to you with great pleasure. You are two idiots. I was below upon the hill-side, hunting, and I left my dogs and snares and springes there, and said: "I'll go and see the good old man up yonder." Here I am. Ah! you have entertained me much! But, in good sooth, living would be a dreary business, if 't were as you say.

(He walks forward, folds his arms, and looks them in the face.)

God—if there be a God, he opens not his mouth—assuredly, in making man, produced a brainless masterpiece. But the progression from earth-worm to viper, viper to dragon, and dragon to the devil, is fine indeed.

(He takes a step toward Torquemada.)

I know thee, Torquemada. Begone. Return to thine own land. I have received thy supplication. I do grant it. Go, my son. Thine idea is a noble one. I laugh at it. Return to Spain and do whate'er thou wilt. I give my nephews all the goods and chattels of the Jews. My sons, you wondered why man is upon the earth. I'll tell you in two words. Wherefore conceal the truth? To enjoy, that is to live. My friends, I see nothing beyond this world, and in this world myself. Where'er he looks each man sees some one word that shines through every obstacle.

(To Francis de Paul.)

With you, the word is, pray; with me it is. enjoy.

TORQUEMADA (looking from one to the other of his companions).

Two forms of the same selfishness.

THE HUNTER.

Chance kneaded dust and opportunity together; man is the resulting compound. Now, as I myself, like you, am naught but common clay, I should be mad indeed to falter and go slow when joy is swift of foot. and not to take a hasty bite at pleasure in the dark, and not to taste of everything, since everything is fleeting! Before all to be happy. I make use of that which men call crime and that which men call vice. Incest-mere prej-Murder - an expedient. I honor scruples by dismissing them. Think you that, if my daughter 's lovely, I will be slow to fall in love with her? Go to! I should be a poor fool. I must exist. Go ask the hawk, the eagle or gerfalcon, whether the flesh he digs his talons in is lawful prey, or if he knows from what nest it came forth. Because you wear a black frock or a white, you deem yourself in duty bound to be inept and trembling, and cast down your eyes before the offer of unbounded happiness the mad world puts before you. Let us then show our wisdom. Let us seize the opportunity. Death has no

sequel, therefore let us live! The ball-room crumbles and becomes the catacomb. The wise man's soul goes dancing to the tomb. Serve up my banquet. If it demands to-day a seasoning of poison for another, so be it. What care I for the death of others? I have life. I am a greedy, huge, insatiable hunger, and the world to me is fruit to be devoured.

Death, I would forget thee. God, I would know naught of thee. Living, I am in haste and happy always; dead, I escape!

FRANCIS DE PAUL (to Torquemada), Who is this renegade?

TORQUEMADA.

The pope, my father.

PART SECOND

TORQUEMADA





Fretel inv.

(% Courtry ...

TORQUEMADA

PART TWO

ACT SECOND SCENE V

TORQUEMADA.

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Oh! I have poured a healing balm upon the ghastly wound of darkness. Paradise was suffering, and heaven had that ulcer in its side, a blazing, bloody hell; I poured the kindlier, healing flame upon this blazing hell, and in the boundless azure I can see the scar.

TORQUEMADA

PART TWO

ACT SECOND SCENE V

TORQUEMADA

O happy day, O joy, O glory! Now the awe-inspiring and majestic clemency soars heavenward in flame! Deliverance forever! Be absolved, ye danned! The stake on earth extinguishes the flames of hell beneath.

(He looks at the sky.)

Oh! I have poured a healing balm upon the ghastly wound of darkness. Paradise was suffering, and heaven had that ulcer in its side, a blazing, bloody hell; I poured the kindlier, healing flame upon this blazing hell, and in the boundless azure I can see the scar.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

TORQUEMADA
DON SANCHO
DONNA ROSA
MARQUIS DE FUENTEL
KING FERDINAND
QUEEN ISABELLA
GUCHO
BISHOP OF SEO DE URGEL
THE KING'S CHAPLAIN
MOSES-BEN-HABIB, Chief Rabbi
DUKE D'ALAVA
AN USHER

SOLDIERS, PAGES, MONKS,
JEWS, BLACK AND WHITE PENITENTS



ACT FIRST

The royal patio (Condes-reyes) in the cloister-palace of the Llana at Burgos.

A square court-yard surrounded by a gallery with trefoil arches. The front of the stage forms one side of this gallery. The court-yard has two great public gates (one gate at each end of the court-yard) opposite each other, opening into the city streets. The gallery in the foreground ends on the left in a closed folding-door at the top of a flight of three steps. On the left it communicates with a portico, which forms a sort of secluded nook. Near the portico, upon a platform, is a tall iron chair, covered with heraldic emblems and crowned with a representation of the pinnacle of the Temple, which is surmounted by a sword, point upward.

Under the portico can be seen two priests, standing like statues, who seem to have been stationed there to guard a casket that lies on the floor.

SCENE I

DON SANCHO, MARQUIS DE FUENTEL; afterward, GUCHO.

(Don Sancho is dressed in cloth of gold. He has a sword at his side.)

DON SANCHO.

Why, 't is a dream!

THE MARQUIS.

Nay, 't is reality.

DON SANCHO.

I am a prince!

THE MARQUIS.

Aye, King of Burgos.

DON SANCHO.

I !

THE MARQUIS.

In this fair province you are the first after the king, Don Ferdinand.

(He kisses Don Sancho's hand.)

Yes, everything is yours, fortune and grandeur.

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DON SANCHO.

And Donna Rosa is to be my wife.

THE MARQUIS.

An hour hence. They are now putting on her crown, making the chapel ready, and beginning to say prayers for you. The Bishop of Seo de Urgel is to marry you. And I am to put everything in order for the ceremony. The king imposed that duty on me.

DON SANCHO.

You, our good genius!

THE MARQUIS.

Donna Rosa, while the lights are being placed upon the altar, awaits you in the cloister, and I, Gil de Fuentel, am to throw the door open for your Highness, so that, in accordance with the ancient custom, you may go seek your bride and bring her hither to do homage to the master and to give thanks to him. The king would speak with you before your wedding. Such is his command. He will be in this gallery.

DON SANCHO.

I would prefer to go straight to the church.

THE MARQUIS.

You must obey, monseñor. He will say: "I do consent." Moreover, 't is the ancient custom, your crown being feudatory to his own.

DON SANCHO.

So be it.

THE MARQUIS.

You must resign yourself to bow to lawful customs.

DON SANCHO.

And my father . . .?

THE MARQUIS.

Was Jorge, Infant of Burgos.

DON SANCHO.

And my grandfather is . . .

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Myself!

DON SANCHO.

The king, who was the Infant's father.

THE MARQUIS.

You will have a long reign and a prosperous . . . Allow me to be your guide.

DON SANCHO.

With my eyes closed. I know not why, but I believe that you do love me. 'T is not long that I have known you. One day you came hither with an order—oh! I was afraid at first—to take myself and Rosa from our old convent to the master. When we arrived I was afraid, it seemed as if we were his prey. At last we are to marry, and my heart o'erflows with joy, and by your side I feel that I am safe.

THE MARQUIS.

Rely on me. I wish to bring about your happiness, and I commend your sacred head to God. If you were ill, upon a bed of suffering, and if, as formerly for Jean, the Comte de Retz, 't were necessary for you to drink blood, my veins I 'd open for sheer delight to see you born again with my heart's blood, while I was dying! O my prince, my king, my lord!

(Aside.)

My child!

(Enters Gucho. He hears the marquis's last words.)

GUCHO (aside, watching the marquis).

Ah! what a kindly air! What a triumphant air! But what 's the odds! I have no wish to know aught of their mystery. I stand apart from all mankind; and were I able to prevent all evil or to cause unmeasured good on earth by moving but one finger, I would

not do it. I crawl upon the ground, I watch what others do, and I am useless. Such is my function.

(Enters a company of the African guard of the King of Castile, with their captain, the Duke d'Alava, at their head.)

THE MARQUIS (to Don Sancho).

Beneath this peristyle the king will presently await monseñor.

(He ascends the flight of steps and throws open the folding doors leading into the interior of the palace cloister. He motions to Don Sancho to follow him.)

Enter, my prince.

not do it. I crawl upon the ground, I watch | (He espies the soldiers and calls Don Sancho's

This guard is here to do you honor.

(He continues to talk as Don Sancho mounts the steps.)

When you hear the clarions, your Highness will return, leading the countess hither to the king, and you will both kneel at his feet.

(He glances outside the gallery.)

Aha! here comes the king!

(Don Sancho passes through the door and the marquis follows him. The door closes behind them.)

(Enters the king, followed by his chaplain.)

SCENE II

THE KING, GUCHO, DUKE D'ALAVA, THE KING'S CHAPLAIN.

THE KING (to the Duke d'Alava). Come hither, duke.

(The duke draws near the king.)

When I do take this collar from my neck to place it upon his . . .

THE DUKE.

I listen, sire.

THE KING (glancing at the guards). They are at hand. 'T is well.

(To the duke.)

When you do hear me say: "I dub thee knight. From this day forth, reign and may God be with thee!" then, duke, you will all draw your swords behind his back, and kill him.

THE DUKE.

Sire, it is enough.

GUCHO (aside, pressing his baubles against his heart).

My dolls are in less jeopardy than men.

(The chaplain puts his month to the king's ear, and points to the casket guarded by the two priests who stand under the portico.)

THE CHAPLAIN (in an undertone to the king).

There are the sackcloth garments. They are all ready, as your Highness ordered.

THE KING.

I doubt if they will serve. No matter.

(Pointing to the portico.)

Wait beneath the arch.

(The chaplain joins the two priests under the portico.

The king turns to the captain of the guards.)

Thou, duke, be ready.

(Aside.)

I propose, be the event whate'er it may, to have at hand a choice of means to put an end to it.

(The door at the top of the steps re-opens, and closes after the Marquis de Fuentel has passed through. He descends the steps slowly. The king has noticed the iron chair and is examining it.)

SCENE III

THE SAME: THE MARQUIS.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

An hour hence he will be married, count and prince! Each passing moment is a step for him from darkness upward to the light. But one more step, and he becomes an august, happy potentate! Oh! how the guileless child doth beam upon the despicable grandfather! I weep, bewildered by the joy of which my wicked, humble, desolate old heart is capable, O gracious God!

THE KING (turning).

Ah! marquis, is it thou?

THE MARQUIS (bowing).

My lord king . . .

THE KING.

I am very glad to speak with thee.

(He points to the old iron chair.)

What is that chair? and why that sword above it?

THE MARQUIS.

That is the throne, O king, whereon your ancestor Don Garcia once sat; the sword is placed upon the pinnacle as representative of royalty.

THE KING.

In good sooth, in this realm of mine I am the source of life and death.

GUCHO (to the king).

King, you are both.

(Some moments before a procession has marched into the square court-yard from the gate at the right, heading for the gate at the left. There are two files of penitents, one white, one black. They march slowly across the stage with their hoods pulled down. The white penitents wear black hoods and vice ver.a. The hoods have holes for the eyes. At the head of the two files a black penitent with a black hood carries a black banner upon which is a skull and crossbones, all white. The procession passes across the stage slowly and silently. Gucho calls the king's attention to the banner.)

THE KING (to Gucho).

Ah yes! that crawling monk!

GUCHO.

Agreed. Crawling, but great. Everyone doth tremble before Torquemada; even yourself.

THE MARQUIS.

One seems, when looking on that banner, to smell the smoking flesh and burning branches.

THE KING.

Whither go yonder fellows, marquis?

GUCHO.

They go to fetch those who are to be burned upon the public square. Suppose you are an humble citizen; without your knowledge you are implicated in some ghastly intrigue; or mayhap some day, in your own house, you thoughtlessly have said some foolish thing; almost before the fatal words have left your lips, they have flown away in haste to the Holy Office, there to fall noiselessly into the cruel ear ever open in the darkness. Thereupon yon banner with its

two files of phantoms issues from the gloomy cloister, and the procession starts. It passes slowly through the throngs of people, overturning everything that lies before it. Nothing stays its course. The people fly as soon as it appears. These men are the *familiars* of the Inquisition, and other men prostrate themselves before them; for they know this vision is a hand stretched out to seize some man in his own home. It goes throughout the city,

(Pointing to the banner and the two files of men who are passing across the stage.)

as at this moment, the banner always marching at the head. By day or night, without a word, without a chant, it goes straight onward to its destination, mute and awe-inspiring. You are sitting tranquilly at home, mayhap at table, laughing and chattering, plucking flowers in the garden, kissing your children, suddenly you see that death's head coming toward you in the gathering dusk. How many people burned! no one to-day can say the number. Whoever sees that banner drawing near to him is lost.

(The procession and the banner disappear through the great gate opposite to that by which they entered.)

THE MARQUIS (in an undertone to the king).

The king doth give the clergy over much support. Torquemada, God save the mark! hath his cabal at Rome, speaks to the pope.

prepares a bull, and that 's enough; the king is overshadowed! and his benignant, dazzling, radiant power ceases to give light! This monk is a usurper. In a few years he hath placed his base-born head upon a level with the head that wears a crown.

(The king is so absorbed in thought that he apparently pays no heed to the marquis's words.)

(In an undertone to Gucho.)

He doth not listen.

GUCHO (in an undertone to the marquis).

'T is because he hath his mind on other matters.

(The king raises his head, dismisses all the bystanders to the back of the stage with a glance, and motions to the marquis to come to him. He leads him to the front of the stage so that no one can hear what he has to say to him. Gucho watches them.)

THE KING (to the marquis).

I have always followed thy advice with profit; I esteem it far above all other men's and listen to it. Marquis, I would consult thee touching an affair which must be carried through in haste, here on this very spot.

(The king notices Gucho, who has remained behind the platform on which the iron chair stands. He waves him back. Gucho walks away.)

GUCHO (aside, glancing at the king and the marquis).

What 's going to happen now? young tiger and old cat!

SCENE IV

THE KING, THE MARQUIS, alone at the front of the stage. The guards are in the background out of hearing.

THE KING.

I will abide by thy advice. I know its wisdom.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

I know what that means. Your Highness will do just precisely what I tell you not to do.

THE KING.

In politics does everything go on as thou wouldst have it? What seest thou, who art so versed in intrigue—what seest thou in Europe that seems durable?

THE MARQUIS.

A dike. You are that dike. You alone do stand erect. All other powers grovel at the feet of France, who waxes greater day by day; my lord, at one point only are you vulnerable, -Navarre; there your frontier is undefended. 'T is most fortunate that, long before ourselves, you saw the danger, found the remedy, and snatched the Infant Sancho from the cardinal and that old petty princeling Orthez, until at last the scales incline toward you. You have the power, Sancho has the right. You are the colossus, he the fulcrum of your lever. As the eagle holds the eaglet in its claws, so you hold him. The only man on earth whose life is necessary to your fortune is Don Sancho. While he lives, France is in check.

THE KING.

He necessary! he alone is necessary to me?

THE MARQUIS.

He with the Infanta Donna Rosa.

THE KING.

And thou sayest 't is to my interest that Sancho lives?

THE MARQUIS.

Aye, most assuredly.

THE KING.

Well, when that door is presently thrown open, he will be killed upon this spot.

(The marquis seems paralyzed with terror.)

This Rosa pleases me. Never did haughtier features wear a modest smile, never did maiden show a happier conjunction of gleaming eye and fascinating voice; she looks at one with an expression that 's inhuman in its sweetness; she has tiny feet that I could easily hold in my hand; she trembles at the slightest provocation, and is the lovelier thereby. Since I, the king, esteem her charming, Sancho 's in the way.

THE MARQUIS.

'T is true.

THE KING.

I know that interests of state would have the master not yield to his inclinations. What is the fitting course for me to take? This caprice hath not come upon me suddenly. One wavers long the while a fire kindles. Think'st thou I have not struggled? I said in my own mind,—for, mark you, I have not

failed to make this wearisome comparison: "Deuce take me! she 's a pretty creature! true, but this marriage is a thing to be desired, for I must have Navarre, without which I have no frontier at all. So, love, be coy! But oh! what eyes! and what a velvet skin! what grace! Ah! king, stop there! Wouldst thou for the first petticoat that passes lose in one day the fruit of ten years' fighting? Look across yonder mountains. King of France is laughing at the King of Spain. Go to, Sancho and Rosa must be wed. The Durance and the Adour ours, our frontier is complete. We will display the genius of an astute and crafty politician,-let them wed! 't is said.'' But no! what yoke so hard to bear as ours when we see her given over to another's arms; I will not brook it. Down with my rival! I will take her from him. Am I a slave, and are my sceptres masters of my acts? Am I to tear my heart to tatters just because a parcel of crowned spies upon the Seine or Rhine or Tiber have their eyes upon me, watching for the hour when my ambition may be caught a-napping? To be a great king is a heavy burden. The heart takes its revenge. It grieves me to be forced to slay this Sancho, and to slay him here, by his own fireside; but we are not born to be bored to death. Pray, is it my fault that this girl is beautiful?

THE MARQUIS. In truth 't is not your fault.

THE KING.

Queen Isabella wearies me, beyond description. I must have another wife. Zounds, man, I have a right to love!

THE MARQUIS.

The lion 's hungry.

THE KING.

I love, therefore I hate. I think upon their childhood side by side in that secluded cloister, she and her charms, and he with his audacity—the grass, the green fields and the darkness, and the kisses that the saucy rascal stole! Don Sancho! Ah! I am jealous of him! and I give my jealousy free rein! It pleases me to count the fierce pulsations of keen hatred in my heart, drunken with rage; I love to feel the shuddering sensation creep up to my hair! To hate is good. hold one's enemy and crush him and trample him beneath one's feet,-I foam with joy at the mere thought. I am the yawning chasm, overjoyed to swallow up the soaring fish-hawk. I feel my pulses tremble with the longing to exterminate. A foolish man is he who seeks to throw me off the scent! I brook no obstacle. I have Don Sancho here and I will be revenged! Revenged for what? Because he is beloved. Because he is well-favored. I, the man who live alone, whose mouth is closed, have a fierce tempest in my heart, and numberless opposing currents. Murder is my friend; Cain is my brother; and while my bearing is grave, cold and indolent, I feel my will bursting all bounds, as the volcano, lying cold beneath its snowy blanket, feels the lava rising to its mouth in glowing waves. He who should seek to soften me would make me roar the louder; the attempt to soothe my wrath would drive me mad. Marquis, I would crush God himself! There are two ways to put the Infant out of sight.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Two ways!

THE KING.

One sad to think upon, the cloister; the other, swift and certain death. The cloister? Yes. The tomb however is the surest. It

hears naught. It's depths are trustworthy. It's door is heavy. The cloister 's dumb, the tomb is deaf. The tomb has this advantage that no one comes forth from it. The cloister is a changeless circle, drawn by a ghastly compass. No one ever turns therein. Don Sancho there would see his fair locks turned to gray, and he would grow to be an old, old man, a prisoner in those gloomy precincts. I can choose between them. I prefer that he should die. What thinkest thou?

THE MARQUIS.

That you are right.

THE KING.

What say you?

THE MARQUIS.

Sire, let him die.

THE KING (aside).

What was that fable some one whispered to me, that Sancho was his son? It is not true!

THE MARQUIS.

I argue as you do.

THE KING (aside).

What lies are breathed in a king's ears!

THE MARQUIS (watching him narrowly). I go with you.

THE KING.

So thy advice is that he die?

THE MARQUIS.

It is.

THE KING (aside).

Ha! this is dubious. Just now he swore that this Don Sancho was most necessary to me, and that he must live for the advantage of my realm. With Sancho's death my claim upon Navarre expires. I have on one side France, the empire on the other.

(Looking askance at the marquis.)

Whither does he seek to lead me? He has some scheme, the traitor.

(Aloud.)

'T would be pleasant to devour Sancho all at once, but what if I should nibble at him? To have him in a cloister is to have him always 'twixt my teeth. Suppose I keep him there, that I may watch him languish, droop, and suffer all the torments of the damned, a dull-eyed, stupid cur? A slow revenge delights the soul. What thinkest thou?

THE MARQUIS.

Why choose the crooked path? Sire, go straightway to your end. Smite, kill.

THE KING (aside).

The villain! Hitherto, in all our interviews, he was for Don Sancho. He forgets, but I remember.

(Glancing at the marquis, who is watching him.)

Double face, whereon I catch a sudden gleam! What reason hath he thus to spur my hatred on? The deuce! how quickly he became of my opinion!

(Aloud.)

Blood . . .

THE MARQUIS.

The bloody kings are they who are best served. Kill.

THE KING (aside).

He is sold to France! the beggar!

(Aloud.)

But thou saidst to me: "Sancho is your hope. He is essential to you; while he lives peace is assured on the frontier."

THE MARQUIS.

I was mistaken. You are great. No one is necessary to you. Nay, not even God. Kill.

THE KING.

Thy advice I feel is most sincerely given. But reflect. The people, a vile horde of mendicants, are ill-disposed to politics and its expedients; the rabble, quickly moved to pity, grieve when a breast is pierced by a sword-thrust or two. They mourn for the departed, more especially if he were a wellfavored youth. They weep for me when I am in my coffin, forget me when I am in prison. Ah! my friend, we must beware of too bold strokes. Sancho is young. The taste for tragedy is dying out. Many good people would be greatly pleased to have him undergoing a mild species of confinement in a convent. Mildness is so delectable! When he is once in durance in the cloister, can he escape? Not so.

THE MAROUIS.

The tomb 's the surer guardian.

THE KING.

But murder . . .

THE MARQUIS (pointing to the palace). These walls are well accustomed to it.

THE KING (aside).

Traitor!

(Aloud.)

Marquis, what is thy last word?

THE MARQUIS.

Kill.

(Fanfare of trumpets.)

Ah! the clarions! here they come!

(The door of the palace is thrown wide open. Don Sancho and Donna Rosa, hand in hand, appear at the top of the steps. Donna Rosa in a dress of silver lace with the crown of pearls on her head. Don Sancho with an earl's hat, surmounted by the alumbrado plume, a combination of feathers and jewels. At their right is the Bishop of Seo de Urgel, with the mitre on his head. Behind them lords and ladies, and priests in embroidered copes.)

SCENE V

THE SAME: DON SANCHO, DONNA ROSA, BISHOP OF SEO DE URGEL.

THE BISHOP.

Ferdinand, King of Castile, this man, Don Sancho, weds this maiden, Donna Rosa, both descended from the Gothic kings, she lady of Orthez, he Count of Burgos; if 't is your pleasure, O my master, I propose to join their hands in matrimony. And Sancho, led by the priest, comes to your feet, bringing his wife to you and offering you his faithful homage, for he is count and you are king.

(Don Sancho and Donna Rosa descend the steps and kneel before the king. The Duke d'Alava takes a step forward. The Marquis de Fuentel watches with bated breath.)

DON SANCHO.

I lay all my possessions, sire, at your feet.

THE KING (gazing sternly at the bishop).

What madness is this, bishop! thou, a priest, dost join a nun in holy wedlock with a monk.

THE RISHOP

My lord and king! . . .

THE KING.

Knowest thou not that they have ta'en the vows? And dar'st thou consummate this ghastly sacrilege, unfearing?

THE BISHOP.

Sire! . . .

THE KING.

A frock for this man! a veil for this woman!

(The chaplain and the priests come out from under the portico. One of the priests has a black veil in his hands, the other a frock of coarse sackcloth. One priest throws the veil over Donna Rosa, the other puts the frock upon Don Sancho. His face disappears behind the hood and Donna Rosa's behind the veil. The soldiers surround them. They tear Don Sancho's sword from his belt. The king makes a violent gesture.)

Away with both of them. Each to a convent!

DON SANCHO (struggling under the hood).

Your Majesty!

THE KING (to the priests).

You 'll answer to me for this man.

THE MARQUIS (breathing freely).

Alive !

(The priests and soldiers lead Don Sancho away in one direction and Donna Rosa in the other.)

THE KING (in an undertone to the marquis).

I'll find a way to lay my hand on her again. Sometimes, thou knowest, a woman comes forth from a cloister.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Ave, and sometimes a man!





ACT SECOND

An apartment in the old Moorish palace at Seville. This palace looked out upon the Tablada where the Quemadero was located.

The apartment is the council hall. The back of the apartment is on a level with a gallery with small Arabian columns, which looks out of doors, and is closed by an immense curtain. At the left a long table, at the ends of which are two high chairs surmounted by royal crowns; the chairs are just alike. On the same side, a low, narrow door, concealed by the hangings, leading to divers secret stairways and passages. On the opposite side, the right, in a jog-piece which extends to the gallery at the back, large folding-doors at the top of a flight of three steps.

The table is covered with a cloth on which are embroidered the arms of Aragon and Castile.

In the middle of the table, on a great silver salver, are thirty piles of gold pieces,—high, thick piles—forming a massive, square block of gold in the middle of the salver.

Upon the table a silver-gilt writing case, parchment, vellum, wax and seals. Gilded and painted pen-holders in the holes of the inkstand.

Near the table a credence with drawers.

SCENE I

MARQUIS DE FUENTEL, MOSES-BEN-HABIB, Chief Rabbi. They enter together through the secret door.

THE MARQUIS.

Money, money, more money!

(The rabbi points to the salver filled with crowns in the middle of the table. The marquis examines the pile of gold.)

Very good.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

Thirty piles, each of a thousand golden crowns.

THE MARQUIS.

A trusty agent.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

Isabella is a miser.

THE MARQUIS.

And Ferdinand a spendthrift. Truth dwells at the bottom of a well, and intrigue in a gold mine. One may obtain by gifts permission from the mighty ones of earth to live. In order to escape the king, the judge who cozens you, the prince, the priest, a poor man must be rich. All kings are beggars. We must supply their needs with lavish hand.

(To the rabbi.)

Go, Jew. Return by the same secret staircase. For the king is close upon my heels.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

Monseñor, since there still is time, I do beseech you, save the Jewish people.

THE MARQUIS.

The danger is most urgent.

(Dismissing him.)

Go.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

I count upon you.

THE MARQUIS.

Count upon thy cash.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

Will not the poor, despairing multitude who weep without be presently permitted to come hither and to kneel before the king and queen?

THE MARQUIS.

So be it. But, for the moment, go.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

O day of woe! if the king come not to our aid, one hundred aged Jews are to be burned in this good city, even here, in Seville; and the remainder of the chosen people will be driven forth, alas!

THE MARQUIS (pensively).

Yes, everything 's in readiness for the auto-da-fé, announced so long ago.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

And is it true that the king leaves Seville to-night?

THE MARQUIS.

Yes. For a day. He will return to-morrow. The charter of King Tulgas, our oldest code of laws, provides that the king pass the morrow of an execution, praying with the queen at the convent in the town of Triana.

THE CHIEF RABBI.

They would not have the task of praying for the dead, did they not kill. Monseñor, try to save us.

THE MARQUIS.

Speak lower, and be gone.

(The rabbi bows to the ground and goes out through the door in the hangings, which closes behind him.)

THE MARQUIS (looking at the door through which the Jew passed).

'T is not thy Jew's hide, nor the hides of all thy chosen people, that cause my anguish and my zeal, and drive me on to venture everything. Alas! I shudder when I hear the ghastly knell of the *auto-da-fé*. Don Sancho's in a monastery, refusing to become a monk, refractory and obstinate. They may at any moment toss him in the flames. I tremble. Ah! that awful cloister! I must tear him from it! How?

(The great door at the back is thrown open. Enters the king, followed by Gucho. Both wings of the door close as soon as the king has passed through.)

(The king is in the full dress costume of the Order of Alcantara, with the sinople cross embroidered in emeralds on the cloak. He wears a green velvet hat without a plume, surmounted by the royal crown.)

(Gucho crouches behind one of the arm-chairs.)

SCENE II

THE MARQUIS, THE KING, GUCHO.

(The king seems to be deeply absorbed in thought, and to pay no heed to his surroundings.)

THE KING (aside).

'T were better to do nothing roughly. I prefer that way.

THE MARQUIS (to the king with a reverence).

A great catastrophe is imminent to-day. If 't is permitted by the king.

(The king raises his head. The marquis points toward the square which is hidden by the curtain of the gallery at the back of the stage.)

A grand *auto-da-fé*. A swarm of people burned alive. At the same time an edict of expulsion of the Jews. A whole race stolen by a monk from Castile's king.

THE KING.

A worthless horde expelled, a hissing stake, is that thy great catastrophe?

(He spies the salver laden with gold on the table.)

Aha! more money?

(To the marquis.)

And from whom?

THE MARQUIS.

The Jews.

THE KING.

How much?

THE MARQUIS.

Thirty thousand golden crowns, which in the name of thirty cities they do offer you.

THE KING.

'T is well. What do they ask?

THE MARQUIS.

That they may be left undisturbed.

THE KING.

'T is overmuch. I cannot leave men undisturbed for being Jews.

THE MARQUIS.

I pray that your kind heart will deign to accept this gold which a whole loyal people lays at the feet of Ferdinand and Isabella. They implore the king their master to prevent the burning of a hundred of their number at the stake to-day.

THE KING.

'T is overmuch.

THE MARQUIS.

To burn a hundred?

THE KING.

No. To pray me to prevent an *auto-da-fé*. My wife is preaching to me, and the pope. Both are forever by my side, most urgent for harsh measures. I must let them burn a few poor devils. Otherwise I shall know no peace. What news? What do folk say?

THE MARQUIS.

Oh! naught of consequence. At Cordova, Tudela, Saragossa, men are being burned.

THE KING.

And then?

THE MARQUIS.

Count Requesens, one day when he was drunk, swore by the saints. Sire, the Inquisition, heedless of his rank, condemned him to be burned to death in his own city, in Gerone; and, as no servant had denounced him, the whole household of the count accused of blasphemy were tortured with the burning brand, and every mortal perished at the stake, even to the fool.

(Gucho jumps as if suddenly awakened.)

GUCHO (aside).

I will become instanter a familiar of the Inquisition! Fever and pestilence! And I will enter on the functions of the post! Damnation! to be burned alive is not my business.

THE KING (looking at the pile of gold).

Fruit of one bleeding of the Jews. They're an auriferous tribe.

GUCHO (aside).

'T is quite enough for me to see the others roast.

THE MARQUIS (to the king).

The Hebrews . . .

THE KING.

Say the Jews!

THE MARQUIS.

The Jews, sire, an industrious and numerous race, most humbly pray the king to tolerate them here in Spain, and to revoke the edict that doth exile them, and not be moved to wrath to see them at his feet.

THE KING.

What more do they desire?

THE MARQUIS.

To die where their forefathers died. To abide in their own land, and I do offer you their ransom, sire. Take it.

THE KING.

If the queen consents, I will consent. Let her be summoned.

(At a sign from the king, Gucho goes to the door at the back of the stage and opens it. An official of the palace appears in the opening. Gucho speaks to him in a low tone. The officer bows and retires. The door closes and Gucho returns to his post beside the chair.)

THE MARQUIS.

King, the Jews will pass their lives in blessing you.

THE KING.

I want their money, not their prayers. Their blessings are an insult to me.

THE MARQUIS.

King, your fathers were well pleased to have the Jews for subjects. When they are driven out, 't is one less people in the realm.

THE KING (imperiously).

Enough! As if a people were of any consequence! A maiden is the subject of my thoughts! Ah! since I placed those bars betwixt her and myself, I cannot sleep, I think of her incessantly, she must be mine. Go to! I am more passionately in love with Rosa than I ever was, and you must come and talk to me of politics! I 'm all for love. What of Don Sancho? Is he yet a monk?

THE MARQUIS.

Not yet.

THE KING.

The scaffold waits for him if he doth still refuse. He shall not live. I placed them both in convents in the city where I dwell, that I might have them always 'neath my hand. The little one at the Assumption, he behind the gratings of the convent of Saint Anthony, wherein Don Jayme the Red, my ancestor, did once immure his wayward son. Don Sancho shall turn priest, and I will have the maiden. I shall soon deliver Rosa.

THE MARQUIS.

What of the late decree concerning convents?

THE KING (in surprise).

The late decree?

THE MARQUIS.

Whoever, were it your royal self, dares go into a cloister to lay hand on any person whomsoever therein being, is declared an outlaw, traitor, faithless to his God, anathema, and parricide.

THE KING.

Is 't so?

(Gazing fixedly at the marquis.)

I enter where I choose, and I am king where'er I go. The moment is at hand when I propose to set free the Infanta. Rosa shall be mine!

THE MARQUIS.

Ah! you will have to do with . . .

THE KING.

Have to do with whom?

THE MARQUIS.

Why . . .

THE KING.

Tell me. Speak.

THE MARQUIS.

With Torquemada.

THE KING.

I, the king!

THE MARQUIS.

And he, the grand inquisitor!

THE KING.

God save the mark!

THE MARQUIS.

Your Majesty, the church in him is incarnate. If he is angry . . .

THE KING.

Well?

THE MARQUIS,

The church doth easily lay hold, but most unwillingly lets go. He is inquisitor. It is his duty to look to it that each convent has its complement of inmates. Not a num nor monk is there whom fraud or force can tear away from him! He prowls about the cloister, sire, showing his teeth, snapping at everyone like a wild beast, and all these lambs are guarded by a wolf. The king, if he be wise, will not attack the priest. Sire, Torquemada stands across your path. He holds the king in check, whatever you may do.

THE KING.

'T is naught to me. He is a man to bribe.

THE MARQUIS.

Try.

THE KING.

If it pleases me to crush this monk . . .

THE MARQUIS.

Try, sire.

THE KING.

I can lavish on him everything that man desires, and the haughtiest have always bowed before me. First of all, to bring a priest to reason, we have—women.

THE MARQUIS.

He is old.

THE KING.

Then there are dignities, the mitre, a diocese, a grandeeship, a title, honors and the purple.

THE MARQUIS.

It is his purpose to remain a monk.

THE KING.

Money.

THE MARQUIS.

Sire, it is his purpose to remain a poor man.

THE KING (thoughtfully).

True it is that, humble, old and indigent, this man is powerful.

(He folds his arms and reflects.)

To have this threatening, omnipotent poverty equal to myself, casting a shadow on my throne, nay, seated by my side! This fellow always on a level with the king!

THE MARQUIS.

And even higher!

THE KING.

No! no!

THE MARQUIS.

Women, honors, money have no power. None of those methods is available to rid yourself of this gray-bearded monk.

THE KING.

I will find others then. Dost understand?

THE MARQUIS.

No. What may they be?

THE KING.

The true means. Dost thou understand me?

THE MARQUIS.

No.

THE KING.

The old priest Arbuez—why not revive this method?—was stabbed upon the very altar steps.

THE MARQUIS.

That had but ill success. They made of him Saint Arbuez. And that was all. You reign and you distribute at your pleasure titles, wealth and blows of the headsman's axe. But with its tongues of fire the church doth seize the hand that threatens it. By persecuting it you build it up. The priests have this strange quality, that, if you kill them, they are the more alive. Nothing can

wipe them out. From a heap of dead priests a ghost is born, it is the priest. Their blood 's immortal and their bones prolific. We crush them while they live, invoke them when they 're dead. Ah! king, you persecute the church. It extricates itself with palm-leaves, chanting, tears and martyrdom. Strike down these cloistered serpents, drunk with gall, and massacre them. Good. Now raise your eves to heaven; see, 't is full of saints-saints of your making, sire. Clasp your hands, fall on your knees. For my part I admire the church, for be she slave or queen, she always has the latest word. Her minions swarm on earth and swarm in heaven. You crush her as a worm and she is born again a brilliant star.

THE KING (in a depressed tone).

She is the disease and I the patient. Thou sayest true. Set Rome at naught! Men have repented having done it. I must be resigned.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

How he doth change his mind! With him the danger lies in this, that one must needs advise the contrary in order to persuade him to do aught, and urge him toward the south that he may go toward the north. And this time he has faith in me. The devil! how my stratagem hath gone astray! The tortuous path which I thought best to use is good for naught. Now I will go straight to my purpose. I will change my tactics.

(Aloud.)

Ah! you have allowed the tonsured knave, the monk, to grow in stature, and he now has reached a towering height.

THE KING (musing).

This Torquemada . . .

THE MARQUIS.

Holds Spain in his grasp. He is the real pope. Wherever you so much as touch your

nail, he lays his paw. He takes your place. Your Majesty, the time has passed when you. whenever it seemed good to you, selecting your own time, could enter any convent with a threat, and force the greedy church to loose its hold. In those days you could hang an abbot. Now, meddle not with him. Ah! this monk is most embarrassing. gallows! lay a hand upon the priest! let him come on! Your power to punish has everything to fear from his; and certes he would laugh to see you place your wooden gallows near the flames about his stake. 'T is an unequal duel. The whole earth, sire, is this monk's. As one sets fire to quick-burning hay, so doth his torch go running everywhere, and change to ashes living men. The awestruck palaces have a conventual air. The elergy puts forth sprouts on every side and grows as swiftly as the nettle. Everyone bows down to the base eyebrows of a frowning monk. Let him escape who can. The proud men grovel, and the bold men tremble. What is being done from Cadiz to Tortosa, and from one end of the kingdom to the other? Marquis Alfonzo and the Denunciation. Prince of Viano, your cousins, are in chains, and sire, that bloodthirsty knave has taken by the throat the Infant of Tudela. Years ago, under the reign of Don Ramiro, or of Donna Leonora, every Spanish city was a scene of gayety and animation; the bells rang out over a dancing, joyous people. But to-day there is no sound. No merry laughter. No more luxury. A bouquet is an object of suspicion. Terror, dread and lamentation everywhere, and the vast Spanish realm is like the dreary aftermath of a great festival. O king, your forests are made into scaffolds, and the supply of wood ere long will fail. True crimes and false crimes are confused, and anything 's enough to send one to the stake. For having

seen a certain person passing, you are his confederate. The son betrays his father, and the father his son. Whoever accidentally knocks down a crucifix, is burned alive. A word, a gesture are rank heresy. This hateful monk has taken Jesus in a frenzy. Everything 's a To muse, to swear by Solomon, to have the air of talking with the devil 'neath one's breath, to bite one's nails, to go barefooted on a day of fast, to wed a wife too youthful or too old, to turn a dead man's face toward the wall, to fail to shun all those who wear a leathern thong about their waists, to use a tablecloth upon a Sabbath day, to drive his ox or ass forth from the barn on Christmas day, to use the name of God more frequently than that of Jesus, or to lie in hiding, each of these is cause for sending men and women to the stake. To follow a dead body to the grave, repeating verses as you go, to sit and weep in darkness or behind a door, to watch, from a secluded, quiet spot, the rising of the first star of the night, are just so many O king, the fire gleams, ascends, consumes, and the broad sky above your head grows ruddier and more ruddy, sire, with the light of that empurpled dawn. Your subjects' blood is drained from you. Soon you will have no soldiers left for war. Ere longsurely it cannot be the king doth realize it, for the king could with a word prevent it all, but no! ere long, the Holy Office will have consigned all Spain to prison, and even now the people have well-nigh forgotten you.

(He points to the gallery at the back of the stage and the curtain drawn across it. Gucho listens attentively.)

This very day, O king, beneath your window here, the stake, a fiery mass above a heap of red-hot embers, will pursue its purifying work, and there, beneath the hungry eyes of the confessor, women clad in flames will

writhe in agony. At the four corners stand four statues, four black prophetesses facing the four winds of heaven, built of hollow stone, and filled with living men. You 'll hear the roaring of those hideous colossi, and see the flickering flames come pouring from their mouths; and nothing save those giants will remain; your people, haggard-eyed and all agape with fear, will see all Spain, your kingdoms and yourself go up in smoke around those four appalling phantoms. For all light proceeds from the vile Quemadero. And you disappear, O king, in the shadow of the executioner.

(The king sinks upon a folding-chair, as if overwhelmed.)

THE KING.

All this is to the profit of the church.

THE MARQUIS.

And to the ruin of the throne. Castile is covered o'er with charnel-houses, and in the distance terror utters piercing shrieks.

(Approaching the king.)

In vain vou struggle. You are taken. Over Spain is spread a sombre web, through which God can be seen, a dimly shining star; a frowning net-work, woven upon earth by Satan who drew the fibres one by one from great Jehovah's side; a snare wherein the wretched human mind is torn to shreds; a sort of vast rose-window of an immeasurable church, where hell-fire gleams on the great altar; there are horror, deathly fright and darkness; and the world stares aghast at the grim monster gnawing at its vitals; it thinks of Baal of old who strangled it; to grow is an abuse, to think a crime; a man is bold to live, and merely to exist is perilous. And in the centre of the web we see the priest, the spider with the fly, the king.

(The bing thangs his head. The marquis watches him and continues.)

Certes, it is a subject of surprise and terror that this wretched skein of cloisters, regulations, dogmas, vows, could make a web to catch an eagle in. But it is done. The eagle 's taken. At this moment his wing is barely fluttering in the mesh. In front of you the missal and the gospel and the Bible rear their heads, and 't is no longer possible for you to carry out your will; you dare not love; nor do you dare to reign. The kings of old, as hard and stubborn as their mountains, long bearded as their forests, were of sterner stuff. The present, far more than the past, is vile as dust. A king allows a woman to enslave him, and in the kindness of his heart crawls in the dust, nor even tries to roar. There is no longer aught upon the earth except one monk. This monk-Oh! how doth the child dare be born?—this monk is king, he has you 'neath his sandals. You, the king! He turns his key upon the human heart; he is above the bishop and above the abbess, in the deacon's eyes and in the nun's. He comes, the law slinks out of sight, the sceptre bends even as a slender reed, the sword is terrified. A stupefying glare shoots from his piercing eyes; his arm is universal empire, and man his target, and as he stoops, the frowning spy of God, to watch the world, his shadow covers everything.

(Looking the king in the face.)

Hereafter history will say: "That was the age of fire. That was a time of darkness and of slavery. What was its product? ashes. To the sword of Pelagus, the fork to stir the embers of the stake succeeded. What was the king's name? 'T was Torquemada.'

THE KING (rising).

Marquis, thou liest in thy throat! His name is Ferdinand, and neither monk nor

pope of Rome can make it other than it is, or say that I, the tiger and the lion, am not king! And I will prove with headless bodies what I say. Go thou, collect a party of armed men, march straightway to the convent of th' Assumption, seize the Infanta, trample out all opposition; such is my pleasure! I propose that everyone shall bow and cringe and slink away as if my face appeared before them unexpectedly! Here is the written order.

(He goes to the table, takes a pen and a sheet of parchment, and writes rapidly.)

"In the law's name, submit. That which the marquis does is done by the king's command."

(He signs and hands the parchment to the marquis.)

If anyone resists, then smite, strike down, burn, crush, exterminate, and then pass on, and look to it that, on the spot where once that cursed convent stood, there be not presently one living being, or one stone upon another!

(Gucho listens with renewed attention.)

THE MARQUIS.

If some monk . . . ?

THE KING.

To death with him!

THE MARQUIS.

Or soldier . . . ?

THE KING.

Cast him into prison. Take a hundred cutthroats of my Moorish guard. 'T will be enough to force a cloister.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Aye, or even two.

(Aloud.)

Although proceeding from the king, this is a bold venture.

THE KING.

Go.

THE MARQUIS.

When the Infanta's in my hands, I must conceal her.

THE KING.

Surely.

THE MARQUIS.

Where?

THE KING.

In my private park, a lonely and secluded spot. Thou knowest it? I leave Seville to-night.

THE MARQUIS.

I know it. For one day,

THE KING.

I go to Triana. On my return 1 wish to find the Infanta . . .

THE MARQUIS.

In the private park.

THE KING.

There Lam master.

THE MAROUIS.

But the key?

(The king goes to the credence and opens a drawer.)

THE KING.

I have two keys, for I alone go thither.

(He takes two keys from the drawer, and hands one of them to the marquis.)

One of them I give to thee.

(He replaces the other key in the drawer, which he closes. Gucho, the king's back being tunned, crawls under the credence, opens the drawer and takes out the key.)

GUCHO (aside).

I take the other.

(He closes the drawer and puts the key in his pocket.)

THE KING.

Ah, yes! these monks are powerful! Ah, yes! these priests are mighty, too! And Torquemada reigns! We'll see.

THE VOICE OF AN USHER (outside, announcing the queen).

Her Majesty, the queen.

(Enters the queen, in black jet, the royal tiara on her head. She makes a profound reverence to the king, who replies with a low bow, without removing his hat.)

(The queen goes to one of the arm-chairs at the end of the table and seats herself therein; after which she remains motionless as if she neither saw nor heard anything.)

(The king and queen both have rosaries hanging at their waists.)

THE KING (in an undertone to the marquis).

Be prompt. Speed is the first essential of success. Go, marquis. Do what I bid thee. (Enters the Duke d'Alava. He walks toward the king.)

What is thy errand, Duke d'Alava?

DUKE D'ALAVA.

The deputies of the Jews who have been banished from your realm crave leave, sire and madanie, to throw themselves at your Majesties' feet. THE KING.

Admit them.

(Exit the duke.)

(In an undertone to the marquis.)

Hasten now, and seize the Infanta. Go at once to the Assumption convent.

THE MARQUIS (aside).

Then to Saint Anthony's.

THE KING.

Begone!

THE MARQUIS.

But . . .

THE KING.

What?

THE MARQUIS.

Suppose the Grand Inquisitor . . . ?

THE KING.

That monk! He is the earthworm, I the dragon.

(He waves his hand imperiously to the marquis. The marquis bows and goes out by the secret door in the hangings. The king takes his seat in the unoccupied chair, opposite the queen.)

(Enter the Jews.)

SCENE III

THE KING, THE QUEEN, THE JEWS.

(Through the door at the back, which is thrown wide open, pours in a frightened, half-clad multitude between two rows of halberdiers and pikemen. They are the Jew deputies, men, women and children, all covered with dirt and dressed in rags, barefooted, with the rope around their necks; some are mutilated and crippled by torture and drag themselves along on their stumps or on crutches; others, whose eyes have been put out, are led by children. At their head is the Chief Rabbi, Moses-Ben-Habib. All have the yellow shield over their tattered garments.)

(At some little distance from the table the rabbi halts and kneels. All those behind him follow his example. The older men beat their heads upon the floor.)

(Neither the king nor queen looks at them. Their eyes seem to be gazing abstractedly over all their heads.)

MOSES-BEN-HABIB (kneeling).

Your Majesties of Aragon, and of Castile, king, queen! our master and our mistress, we, your trembling subjects, are in sore distress; barefooted, ropes about our necks, we pray to God and you; and, living in death's shadow, some of us being doomed to die by fire, and all the poor remainder, women and old men, being hunted from the realm, we bring our plaint to you, O king and queen, beneath the all-seeing eye of Him who sits in heaven. Your Majesties, your edicts pour upon us in hot haste, we weep, our fathers' bones do quiver, and the peaceful sepulchre doth tremble at your deeds. Have pity. Ours are faithful and submissive hearts; we live retired in our modest houses, humble and alone; our laws are strict and simple, so that a child might write them down. The Jew doth never

sing and never laugh. Tribute we pay, however great the sum. Men kick us as we lie upon the ground; we're like the clothing of a murdered man. Glory to God! But must it be that, with the new-born babe, the nursing infant and the child but newly weaned, naked, driving his ox and dog and goat before him, Israel must fly, and scatter to all quarters of the earth? That we shall cease to be a nation to become mere wanderers? Nay, king, drive us not forth with pikes, and God will throw the golden gates of heaven open to you. Have compassion on us. We are crushed. We shall no more behold our trees and fields of grain! The mother's breasts will cease to give forth milk! The wild beasts in the woods live with their mates in peace, the birds sleep tranquilly beneath the waving branches, and the roe is left to nurse her little ones untroubled: pray permit us to live likewise, in our caverns, 'neath our wretched roofs, almost like prisons, and we almost slaves, but near our fathers' ashes; deign to suffer us beneath your feet which we bathe with our tears! Ah me! what misery to be dispersed in far off lands! Permit us still to drink at our own springs and live among our fields, and you will prosper! Woe is me! we wring our hands in our despair! O king, spare us the agony of banishment, of bitter, endless, everlasting solitude! Leave us our native land, our native sky! The bread whereon one weeps

while eating it is changed to gall. If we are ashes, be not you the wind.

(Pointing to the gold upon the table.)

Behold our ransom. Vouchsafe to accept it. O protect us, king and queen. See our despair. Stretch out your wings above us, not as evil angels, but as kind and tender-hearted angels, for the black wing and the white wing cast not the same shadow. Oh, revoke your edict. We implore you by your consecrated ancestors, as grand as lions, by the tombs of all the kings and queens, deep minds, and filled with radiant light; we place our hearts, O rulers of your fellow-men, our prayers, our lamentation in the hands of your Infanta, of the child Joanna, as fresh and innocent as the wild strawberry whereon the bee doth light. King, queen, have pity!

If we are

(A moment of silence. Ferdinand and Isabella remain absolutely motionless, they do not even turn their eyes. The Duke d'Alava, who stands with drawn sword in front of the table, touches the chief rabbi on the shoulder with the flat of his sword. The rabbi rises to his feet and he and all the Jews retire with bent heads, walking backward. The guards form in line and hustle them off the stage. The door remains open after they have gone.)

(The king motions to the Duke d'Alava, who goes to him.)

THE KING (to the duke).

The queen and I desire to consult in private touching the decree. If anyone comes hither, though it were a prince, arrest him, duke! I will cut off the head of any man who dares to enter. Close the door and guard the corridor. (The duke lowers his sword, bows, puts up his sword and retires. The door closes. The king and queen remain alone.)

(During this scene Gucho has disappeared under the table where he is hiding.)

SCENE IV

THE KING, THE QUEEN; GUCHO, under the table.

(The king and queen gaze earnestly at each other without speaking. Absolute silence. At last the queen lowers her eyes and looks at the money on the table.)

THE QUEEN.

Thirty thousand golden marks.

THE KING.

Thirty thousand golden marks.

THE QUEEN.

But they 're a race accursed, who watch the planets.

THE KING.

Thirty thousand golden marks make six hundred thousand piasters, which make twenty million sequins.

THE QUEEN.

Sequins?

THE KING.

Sequins, which, when changed to African bezants, would make the wherewithal to freight a galley!

THE QUEEN.

True, but the Jew doth make himself invisible, and light himself by setting fire to a dead child's fingers.

THE KING.

Doubtless.

THE QUEEN.

It would fill a galley?

THE KING.

To the brim.

THE QUEEN.

With bezants?

THE KING.

Aye, with bezants. And we should have twice the weight in silver douros.

THE QUEEN.

My mind is ill at ease. My lord, let us repeat a pater.

(She takes her rosary. A pause. The king touches the piles of gold and moves them about.)

THE KING (under his breath).

With this gold I could prosecute the war at Boabdil with ease.

THE QUEEN (still telling her beads).

My lord, should I die first, give me your oath that you will not remarry.

THE KING (under his breath).

With this gold the war at Boabdil . . .

THE QUEEN.

Say, will you swear?

THE KING.

Swear what? Of course.

(Pensively.)

This gold would all the cost defray, yes, all. And I should have Grenada,—a bright pearl for our diadem.

(The queen, having finished her prayer, lays her rosary on the table.)

THE QUEEN.

My lord, let us e'en take the gold, and none the less expel the Jews, whom I cannot accept as subjects.

(The king raises his head. The queen repeats.)
Let us expel the Jews and keep their money.

THE KING.

I had thought upon it. But that course might well discourage others.

THE QUEEN (looking at the gold).

Thirty thousand golden crowns! in your hands . . .

THE KING.

Nay, in yours.

THE QUEEN.

Could we ask more?

THE KING.

Anon.

(He handles the piles of gold.)

I could retake Grenada from the base-born bastard Moor. We might allow the Jews to stay but drive away the Moors.

THE QUEEN (hesitating).

True.

THE KING.

'T is the law of compensation.

THE QUEEN.

A choice between two Sodoms.

THE KING.

Do we accept the money?

THE QUEEN.

Yes.

THE KING.

(He takes a pen, and writes upon a piece of vellum, consulting the queen with a glance.)

'T is well. First, the edict is revoked, that banishes that flock of miscreants, the Jews, and separates them from the Spanish people; next the *auto-da-fé* appointed for to-day forbidden to take place; lastly, an order to release all the Jew prisoners.

(The king signs, pushes the vellum toward the queen and passes the pen to her.)

THE QUEEN (taking the pen).

'T is said.

(As the queen is about to sign the great door opens noisily.)

(The king and queen turn about in amazement.)

(Gucho puts out his head.)

(Torquemada appears in the doorway at the top of the steps, in his Dominican's frock, an iron crucifix in his hand.)

SCENE V

THE KING, THE QUEEN, TORQUEMADA.

(Torquemada looks neither at the king nor the queen. He has his eyes fixed upon the crucifix.)

TORQUEMADA.

For thirty silver pieces Judas sold thee. This king and queen are on the point of selling thee for thirty thousand golden crowns.

THE QUEEN.

Great Heaven!

TORQUEMADA (throwing the crucifix upon the piles of crowns).

Come, Jews, and take him!

THE QUEEN.

Father!

TORQUEMADA.

Triumph, Jews! as it is written! for this king and queen deliver Jesus Christ to you.

THE QUEEN.

My father!

TORQUEMADA (looking them both in the face).

Be accursed, O king! Be thou accursed,
O queen!

THE QUEEN.

Mercy!

TORQUEMADA (stretching his arm over their heads).

To your knees!

(The queen falls on her knees. The king hesitates, shuddering.)

Both!

(The king falls on his knees.)
(Pointing to Isabella.)

Here the queen,

(Pointing to Ferdinand.)

And there the king. A heap of gold between. Ah! you are king and queen!

(He seizes the crucitix and raises it above his head.) Behold your God. I take you in the act. Bow down and kiss the ground.

(The queen prostrates herself.)

THE QUEEN.

Mercy!

TORQUEMADA.

O horror!

THE QUEEN.

Father, give us absolution!

TORQUEMADA.

Monstrous insolence! And so-'t is thy reign, Antichrist!-the Jews are to be reconciled, the auto-da-fé proscribed. The saving stake will not be set alight. These sovereigns, forsooth, say no. And so this wretched toy, the sceptre, dares to touch the cross! This knave, an earthly prince, dares to be deaf to what the Christ hath said! 'T is time that I should speak to you and warn you. The Holy Office hath full power over you. From its decrees the pope alone 's exempt, but kings are not. While you are sleeping, while you sit at meat, at any hour our banner hath the right to enter your abode, bringing its stern and melancholy message. The kings, false gods, have ever much employed the thunder, and Heaven loves them not. Your laws,

O princes, are the vain and empty ones, and ours the true. We are the wheat and you the tares. Some day the scythe will come to mow the mighty harvest! Kings, we undergo your yoke, but we denounce you. Day after day we cast your names into the dark abode of mystery, where secret, solitary punishment awaits you! With dead kings' skulls are the dark places paved. Aha! you think that you are strong because your camps are filled with soldiers and your ports with sails. God meditates, keen-eyed, among the stars. So tremble!

THE QUEEN.

Mercy!

THE KING (rising).

Sir Inquisitor, the king and queen, with contrite hearts and making full profession of their faith, do purpose to repair the ill they were about to do. The Jews shall be expelled, and, father, we permit you and the Holy Office, and your consecrated priests to light the fires instantly.

TORQUEMADA.

Dost think that I have waited?

(He descends the three steps, goes to the gallery at the back of the stage and violently pulls the curtain aside.)

Look.

(Night is beginning to fall. Beyond the gallery at the back of the stage, a large space entirely open, can be seen the square of the Trablada filled with people. In the centre of the square is the Quemadero, a huge structure bristling with flames and filled with piles of fagots and upright posts, and with victims in san benitos, who can be indistinctly seen through the smoke. Large vessels filled with pitch and tar are attached to the tops of the posts, and empty themselves in fiery streams upon the heads of the sufferers. Women stripped naked by the flame are burning, tied to iron stakes. Loud shrieks are heard, At the four corners of the Quemadero are seen the four gigantic statues, called the Four Evangelists, reddened by the glare. They have holes and cracks through which heads are frantically thrust and waving arms which seem like living fire-brands. Torture and fire everywhere.)

(The king and queen look on aghast. Gucho, under the table, stretches his neck and tries to see. Torquemada feasts his eyes contemplatively upon the Quemadero.)

TORQUEMADA.

O happy day, O joy, O glory! Now the awe-inspiring and majestic clemency soars heavenward in flame! Deliverance forever! Be absolved, ye damned! The stake on earth extinguishes the flames of hell beneath. Be blessed, O thou by whom the soul ascends to happiness, thou stake, the glory of the fire whereof hell is the shame, the path that leads to the resplendent road, the gate of Paradise reopened to the human race, sweet, ardent pity ceaselessly caressing, mysterious redemption of the slaves of darkness, auto-da-fé! Forgiveness, grace, light, fire, life, bedazzling glory of the face of God! Oh! the deathless parting and the souls redeemed! unbelievers, sinners, O my cherished flock, with a brief period of torture here you purchase happiness unending; men are accursed no more, and exile is unknown. Salvation is secured to all in heaven. Love awakes, and this its triumph, this its miracle! What ecstasy! to go by the straight path to heaven! to fall not by the wayside!

(Shrieks from the flames.)

Hear you Satan roar to see them fly? May the eternal monster weep forever in the eternal slough! With mine own hands I closed the huge red door. Oh! how he gnashed his teeth when I made fast the two grim wings thereof. Forever, never! Frowning darkly, he remained behind the gloomy wall.

(He looks at the sky.)

Oh! I have poured a healing balm upon the ghastly wound of darkness. Paradise was suffering, and heaven had that ulcer in its side, a blazing, bloody hell; I poured the kindlier, healing flame upon this blazing hell, and in the boundless azure I can see the scar. It was the wound in thy dear side, O Christ! Hosanna! the wound that seemed incurable is cured. No more hell-fire. 'T is quenched. The springs of sorrow have run dry.

(He looks at the Quemadero.)

O rubies of the furnace! living embers! precious stones. Blaze, fire-brands! burn, coals! hiss on, O sovereign fire! shine forth, O pyre, gorgeous casket filled with sparks soon to become bright stars! Souls issue from their bodies as from behind a veil, and happiness emerges from the bath of torture! Splendor! fiery magnificence! cascades of flame! Satan, my foe, what sayest thou?

(In an ecstasy of excitement.)

O fire, that dost purge away all evil stains with thy fierce flame! A supreme transfiguration! act of faith! We both are 'neath God's eyes, Satan and I. Fork-bearers both. Both rulers of the flames. He luring mortals to destruction, I redeeming souls; both executioners, using like means, whereby he peoples hell, I heaven, whereby he doth evil, I do good; he 's in the sewer, I am in the temple. And the flickering shadows gaze upon us from the tomb.

(He turns toward the victims.)

Ah! but for me you had been lost, my well-beloved! The pool of fire purifies you while it burns. You curse me for the moment, children! but, ere long, when you are conscious what you have escaped, then you

will thank me; for I have smitten even as Michael the Archangel; the white seraphim, leaning to look into the sulphurous pit, revile the hideous abortion in its depths; your roars of hatred, when they reach the light, will change to stammering amazement, ending in hymns of love! Ah me! how have I suffered to see you in the torture-chamber, shricking, weeping, writhing in the brazen vise's jaws, seared by the red-hot iron! Freed at last! depart! fly upward! enter into Paradise!

(He stoops as if looking beneath the ground.)

No, thou shalt have no more immortal souls!

(He stands creet.)

God grants us the support we asked, and man is rescued from the pit of hell. Begone, begone! off through the scorching darkness and the great winged flames, the smoke departing wafts on high the living spirit saved from the dead flesh! All human crime of the old days is purged away; one had his venial fault, another had his sin, but, fault or sin, each soul had its own monster in itself, dimming its light and gnawing at its wing; the angel fell a victim to the devil. Now, the flames are everywhere, and the divine and glorious heritage is parceled out in Jesus' presence in the bright light of the tomb. Ye dragons, fall as ashes to the grounds; fly heavenward, ye doves! You, who were in the grasp of hell, are free, free! Ascend from darkness to the light of day. Put on thine immortality!





ACT THIRD

It is night.

A terrace of the private park, Hucrto del Rey, at Seville.

The terrace is of great width; at the right and left are avenues of trees. At the back of the stage the terrace ends at a staircase, of which the steps cannot be seen; it gives access to the terrace from the garden below. The staircase runs the whole length of the terrace. Those persons who ascend it show their heads first, then their bodies, etc., until they reach the level of the terrace.

On the terrace there is a marble bench.

The garden beyond the terrace is in darkness. Mountains in the background. Solitude.

The moon rises during the act.

SCENE I

TORQUEMADA, GUCHO.

(They enter from the avenue of trees at the right, Gucho acting as guide to Torquemada. Gucho holds his two baubles against his breast with one hand, and with the other hands a key to Torquemada.)

GUCHO.

Vouchsafe, monseñor, to remember that 't is I who hand to you the key of the king's private park, I, Gucho, fool to the said king, our lord. What crime 's to be committed here? I cannot say. I do not know myself.

Methinks 't is better that you should be here to see with your own eyes all that takes place. The sacred privileges of the convent are involved, likewise a maiden, whom the king would take by force, although she has been, by her family, betrothed to her young cousin; thus much and no more do I know of this wicked plot. I am the king's fool. My duty is to make him laugh.

(Torquemada takes the key.)

(Aside.)

Denunciation is a shameful thing; but to be roasted is far worse. My choice is made. Good-night. I am not blessed with the good luck to shine in an auto-da-fé. I'll shine as a keen blade, not as a candle. Question. At this hour with whom do I keep faith? Myself. And that 's enough. You idiot, who fancied me a hero, a bold, slashing, wayward spark, a martyr craving death, were much mistaken. What will happen here? I wash my paws of it. If I should burn, the king would remain cold. This worthy graybeard here has but to raise his finger and you 'll see his Majesty fall flat upon his belly. Therefore I denounce. What matter! I must think of me and no one else, deuce take it! I withdraw my finger from the pie. And I am off.

TORQUEMADA (gazing at the key, aside).

This king bath bardly been absolved ere he begins again. A bad man and a coward.

(Gucho has gone to the further side of the terrace. He glances down into the dark garden.)

GUCHO (aside).

Yonder I see a group beneath a tree. Methinks they mean to come up hither by the marble staircase. There are three! Why three? But never mind that why, let me escape scot-free, and everything may go to pieces after me!

TORQUEMADA (aside, looking toward the garden).

This is the private park. The hiding place of vice.

(He walks slowly into the avenue of trees at the left.)

GUCHO (aside, looking toward the stairs).

They come. Let us be off.

(He goes out as he came on. The Marquis de Fuentel comes first up the stairs, followed by Don Sancho and Donna Rosa in novices' costumes as in the first act. The marquis leads the way, with his finger on his lips, looking cautiously about.)

SCENE II

MARQUIS DE FUENTEL, DON SANCHO, DONNA ROSA.

THE MARQUIS.

Your novice costumes would be dangerous, if it were light. But this is a deserted spot, 't is dark and no one sees us. Ah! my God! you 're free at last. No one suspects that you are here; I took a less direct road than the usual one and no one followed me; I sent away the people who went with me to the convent, but as yet nothing is done, and I am fearful. We must at once procure horses and clothing, then take flight. We have until to-morrow only to consider.

(Looking into the solitary avenues.)

I have made the gate secure. There is no risk. The king alone can enter here, and he is absent.

(To Don Sancho.)

Prince, madame, rely on me. The difficulties to be overcome ere I can hope to liberate you from this place are most appalling, but I am determined, and I feel my strength wax greater in the face of danger. My whole life is dedicated to you. The convent left behind, that is the first step; the second to leave Spain behind. I lack not an inventive mind, but how, alas! are we to pass the French frontier? This Torquemada is on guard, he has all Spain within his grasp, and rises higher as the king sinks lower. I have forced two convents. Soon the Grand Inquisitor will be upon my track. As yet no one disturbs us here.

But we must find another hiding-place ere dawn. The king may come. Ah! what to do? Where find some one who will consent to shelter you and save you? We must have recourse to some monk. They are omnipotent. I go to seek the man we need. But they are traitors. Now and then a priest sells those who 've purchased him. How ardently I wish that you were safe in France. I have another reason for anxiety, concerning which I cannot hold my peace; 't is this: this private park, secluded as it is, is near the palace of the Holy Office—so near, in truth, that its wall is adjacent to the prison wall. I leave you for a moment. To fly or die together? Even so! I go to seek a place of shelter. Ah! I am afraid. However, now you are alive. My blessing on you.

DON SANCHO.

We owe all to you!

THE MARQUIS.

Ah! my poor outcasts, we must find some method to elude pursuit. Await me here.

DON SANCHO.

How shall we thank you? Tell us that.

THE MARQUIS.

By being happy.

(Exit by the same road that Gucho followed.)

SCENE III

DON SANCHO, DONNA ROSA.

DON SANCHO.

Ah me! I fear I know not what. To see thee once again is heaven. But to tremble for thee—O what misery!

DONNA ROSA.

God reunites us, God will rescue us. (She gazes at him ecstatically.)

I love thee!

(They throw themselves madly into each other's arms.)

DON SANCHO (gazing into the darkness overhead).

Oh! will not some blest angel come from you distant, starry sky and shield thee in the shadow of his wings? Are there no angels left in heaven, or have the angels lost their wings, alas?

DONNA ROSA.

We have a friend, dear, faithful man!

DON SANCHO.

Alas! he is himself in deadly fear. Danger 's on every side.

(Torquemada appears, standing in the shadow of the trees. He hears these last words. He looks and listens. He gazes at Don Sancho and Donna Rosa in the half-light with increasing surprise. Neither of them sees him. Don Sancho takes Donna Rosa's hand and raises his eyes to heaven.)

Oh! who will come and offer thee protection?

TORQUEMADA.

1.

(Both turn in utter amazement.)

SCENE IV

DON SANCHO, DONNA ROSA, TORQUEMADA.

TORQUEMADA.

I recognize you.

DONNA ROSA.

'T is the old monk!

TORQUEMADA.

I am the man, condemned to death by Sodom, smitten by Gomorrha, to whom you, two stranger children, did bear aid. I was entombed alive, and you did come to me. You set me free. You are the dove and eagle who released me from the sepulchre. To you I owe it that I now look upon the light of day. Ah yes! you saved me, now 't is my turn!

DONNA ROSA.

'T is the old monk!

TORQUEMADA.

I see by your serge frocks that you are consecrated to the Virgin, both. I find you as you were when I first saw you. I was not alive, nor was I dead; you came to me, as it were two angels, from on high; you saved my life. God, by strange roads, once more leads me across your path to-day. You call for help and I stretch out my hand. God stations Dominic above Peter the Second, myself above that wicked monarch, Ferdinand, to watch them. I pass by and hear your call. You seem in peril. Are you prisoners? What succor do you need? God places in my hand the means of entering this palace, this unhallowed den, to serve some purpose of his own;

I find you here in trouble and am not surprised thereat, for step by step God leads us both. You came to me when I was in the tomb. Now, captives both, you tremble in this baleful spot. I come. Without my succor you would die. Without yours I was lost. Your coming I did not foresee, and mine is unforeseen. How came you there? How come I here? Your coming was a miracle, mine is a prodigy. God knoweth what he doeth.

DON SANCHO (to Donna Rosa).

Yes, 't is he!

TORQUEMADA.

Fear not, for I am here beside you. I suspect some trap. Recluse and monk I am, but I know men. I love you, and I will defend you e'en against the king himself.

DON SANCHO.

Pray, do you stand beside the king?

TORQUEMADA.

Above.

DON SANCHO.

Who are you, in God's name?

TORQUEMADA.

Naught in myself. Everything through Christ.

DON SANCHO.

Your name?

TORQUEMADA.

My name 's Deliverance. I am he who looks through the transparent earth and sees the yawning hell beyond; my gaze pursues the frightened, haggard demons, and I see, below, the pit we must avoid, the sullen flames, and in my hand I hold the urn with which to put them out. But tell me, pray, the names you hear.

DON SANCHO.

Mine, Sancho, Infant of Burgos.

DONNA ROSA.

Mine, Rosa, Infanta of Orthez.

DON SANCHO.

We are betrothed.

TORQUEMADA.

Methinks you have as yet taken no vows save those from which a dispensation sets you free. But tell me how it comes about that you are here?

DON SANCHO.

The king by force consigned me to the convent. So it was with her. We both have fled.

TORQUEMADA.

You must needs pay a fine. The king will pay more dearly, his sin being greater far. It is a crime to make a royal prison of God's cloister, and no person may be forced to enter there against his will. You both are free. Hope, Rosa, Sancho, hope! What other wish have you?

DON SANCHO.

To wed, my father.

TORQUEMADA.

So be it. I myself will join your hands in matrimony.

DONNA ROSA.

O, monseñor!

(She attempts to throw herself at his feet, but he, with a gesture, forbids it.)

TORQUEMADA.

Heaven to the dead, and to the living happiness; such are the gifts I bring, and, calm and humble, in one hand I hold a torch, a palm branch in the other. Be ye happy!

DON SANCHO.

Day of joy! I know not why, but, standing by your side, I cease to fear the king. If I feared anyone 't would be yourself. You come to us like a strange providence. I feel that you are powerful and to be feared.

TORQUEMADA.

Even as Rachel who saw Jacob and espoused him, Rosa, you shall wed with Sancho, and the grace divine will foil the projects of the king, which I suspect. Yes, I will save you both. Rely upon it.

DONNA ROSA.

Oh! whoe'er you be, priest, bishop, thanks! My father, be thou blessed. It was a joyful hour, O upright and holy man, when God permitted us to hear your cries coming from the tomb!

DON SANCHO.

How well I do remember it, as if I still were there; it was a lovely April evening; I was plucking roses, and she chasing butterflies; the words we whispered to each other mingled with the last rays of the sun; night fell, and suddenly I heard a cry, 't was like a dying man's appeal for help; I saw a stone, I listened . . .

DONNA ROSA.

And thou saidst: "A man is buried here! Come, let us save him!" But the stone, alas! was much too heavy.

DON SANCHO.

But there was an iron cross near by, my Rosa . . .

DONNA ROSA.

Thou didst tear it from the ground.

(Torquemada makes a horrified gesture.)

DON SANCHO.

Even so, I took the cross, and certes 't was a serviceable crow-bar; thanks to it the tomb was opened, and you came forth alive.

TORQUEMADA (aside).

O Heaven, they are damned!

DON SANCHO.

The while I raised the stone she bore upon the lever, and with our united strength we threw your prison open.

TORQUEMADA (aside).

Ah! a cross torn from the ground! O monstrous sacrilege! Beneath their feet the fire, the everlasting fire burns! they are without the pale. Great God! Behold they have emerged from Calvary's protecting shadow! Wretched creatures! 'T is not

with the king that they have now to deal, but God!

(To Don Sancho and Donna Rosa.)

This iron lever, are you sure that 't was a cross?

DON SANCHO.

Most sure; it stood amidst the dry grass at the foot of the old wall; I took it in my hands.

TORQUEMADA (aside).

A cross torn from its place! A cross! No matter. I will save them.—In another way!

(He waves his hand to them in farewell.)

I will return anon.

DON SANCHO.

We have no friends, we have no place of refuge in this hour of gloom. Our only hope, monseñor, is in you.

TORQUEMADA.

Fear not. Yes, I will save you.

(Exit by the staircase at the back of the stage. He passes slowly out of sight as he descends.)

SCENE V

DON SANCHO, DONNA ROSA.

DONNA ROSA.

Let us return thanks on our knees. Help from on high! The Lord performs a miracle for us. How swiftly hope returns! is it not true, Don Sancho? And how eagerly we grasp at any branch, however frail. The man whose life we saved is in this place and saves us in his turn! Yes, I have faith, I hope. Am I not right? What thinkest thou?

DON SANCHO.

Aye, surely! hope, my angel! He owes us his life and gives us ours. Ah! my heart is overflowing; I am like a drunken man.

(He draws her to his side.)

Come! come! at last let us breathe freely! Oh! I feel the shadow of the seraph's wing upon our brows after so many cruel blows. An open hand is 'twixt us and the stars.

DONNA ROSA.

Yes, 't is the hand of God, who shelters us.

DON SANCHO.

Oh! tell me, hearest thou not the singing of the heavenly choir draw near?

(Pointing to the park and the clumps of trees.)
All nature thrills with sweetest music.

DONNA ROSA.

When we thus do meet again, all that we long to say comes rushing to our lips at once,—the past, the present, all that we have

suffered, wished or thought, the many sleepless nights we've passed, God and his boundless pity, and the wickedness of man. At last the heart o'erflows. We say: "I love thee;" and we realize that all is said. My dear, I have wept bitter tears! When hope had vanished, when I found myself immured in that dark cloister, when I saw the thread that linked our destinies together broken, our hearts torn asunder, and the king's projects vaguely outlined,—horror! I felt that I was strong, invincible, affectionate and proud, and many times I wished that I were dead.

(The light of the moon begins to soften the dark lines of the horizon.)

DON SANCHO.

And 1,-didst thou but know! But, Rosa, let us put it all away. The heart alone is living, love alone is on its feet. All else is falling to decay and dying. But we are to be wed, yes, wed and saved! I place my trust in yonder priest. He but restores what he received from us. Come, let us live and love! See the moon rising o'er the mountain-tops, the streams, the forests filled with one great throbbing heart; and all this loveliness is of God's clemency, my Rosa. All the sweetness nature lavishes upon this lovely spot commands us to have faith, and proves that God exists. So fear no more, my dearest, innocent, halftrembling heart! Grief is the lily, hope the dew. Grief opens its white flower, God weeps our sorrows and our cries of woe moved him to pity. Unknown guardians watch over us. I see about us shadows who assist us. What can I say to thee? I love thee! We are victors and the perfect peace of the deep azure vault of heaven steals into our hearts. So let us hope!

Celestial, married? Beauty, chastity, thy sacred body and thy blessed flesh,—O God! the dreams I dreamed within the cloister walls! O God! the ardent longings of my sleepless nights! To be thy spouse! to scize the angel as she flees in shy confusion! Every instant to be by thy side, to see thee, and to say to thee by day and night the words

DONNA ROSA.

Ah! yes, I feel that some one soon will set us free. I hope. To hope is to be born again.

DON SANCHO.

To love's to live.

DONNA ROSA.

What had I in my mind? Ah, yes! I wished to tell thee that I love thee!

DON SANCHO.

Then come near to me.

(She approaches him.)

Come closer.

(She obeys. They both sink upon the bench, Donna Rosa in Don Sancho's arms.)

DONNA ROSA (gazing into his face).

O Don Sancho! O my king! how lovely is thy face!

DON SANCHO.

My Rosa, soon we shall belong, forever, each to the other. Rosa mine, how true it is that God comes when you pray to him! Oh! dost thou realize the meaning of that word

sacred body and thy blessed flesh,—O God! the dreams I dreamed within the cloister walls! O God! the ardent longings of my sleepless nights! To be thy spouse! to seize the angel as she flees in shy confusion! Every instant to be by thy side, to see thee. and to say to thee by day and night the words that tell of bliss ineffable; to hear thec. trembling shyly, say them o'er to me, and kiss them on thy smiling lips! to have no other burden and no duty save to live in Paradise! And soon, who knows?-nay Rosa, do not blush!-to see a tiny creature pressing his dear little hands against thy lovely breast,-I, still the lover, he the master! And to hear him lisping with his lips so honey-sweet the dear word: "Mother!"

DONNA ROSA (with an adoring glance).

O my best beloved, he will call thee: "Father!" too.

(During their ecstasy, the top of a black banner appears at the back of the stage, behind and below the top of the staircase. The banner slowly ascends. At last the whole of it can be seen. In the centre is a skull, with two cross-bones, white upon a black ground. It comes nearer. Don Sancho and Donna Rosa turn about and stand as if petrified. The banner continues to ascend. The hood of the banner bearer comes in sight, and at his right and left the hoods of two lines of penitents, black and white.)

DON SANCHO.

O Heaven!

NOTE TO TORQUEMADA

On the first page of the author's manuscript are these words:

"Begun May I, 1869, while L'Homme Qui Rit was going through the press."

At the head of the second act of the first part, The Three Priests:

"As this act, which is necessary to the development of the idea, is likely to be suppressed if the play is performed, I number it separately."

This act must have been written after the others, as it bears on the first page the date, July 1st.

Act I. of the second part is said to have been begun May 20th and finished May 28th. Act II. begun June 1st, finished June 16th. Act III. begun June 16th.

At the foot of the last page we read:

"June 21, 1869. Forty years ago, in this same month of June (1829), I was writing Marion de Lorme." The author began to write a preface to Torquemada, but seems never to have completed it. The following fragment is all that has ever been discovered:

- "When a man who left his mark upon institutions and events disappeared without disclosing the secret of his conscience, and has continued to be an enigma to historians,—have the philosopher and the poet the right to search for that secret? have they the right to proffer an explanation? have they the right to interpret it for themselves?
 - "The author thinks that he has. Hence Torquemada.
- "The opinions of historians on the subject of Torquemada are not in accord. In the eyes of some he is a blood-thirsty creature, by nature an executioner; in the eyes of others a visionary, an executioner by compassion.
- "Of these two opinions the author has chosen that one which seemed to him the more philosophical from the human standpoint, and the most dramatic from the literary standpoint.
- "Moreover, in the Torquemada of this drama, the visionary become executioner, there is nothing which is irreconcilable with possible reality."

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